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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilisation

Invisible Strategies
Gender in French and Norwegian Business Education
1870 – 1980

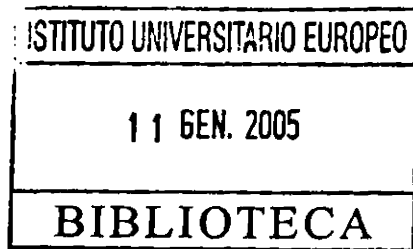
By
Eirinn Larsen

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor in History and Civilisation
from the European University Institute

Florence, January, 2005

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1870 – 1980**

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**Thesis submitted for
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Examining jury:

Prof. Bo Stråth (European University Institute) – Supervisor
Prof. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (European University Institute)
Prof. Anne-Hilde Nagel (University of Bergen)
Prof. André Grelon (EHESS, LASMAS-Idl, Paris)



Invisible Strategies



Gender in French and Norwegian Business Education,
1870 - 1980

Eirinn Larsen

The European University Institute (EUI)

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of History and Civilization in Partial
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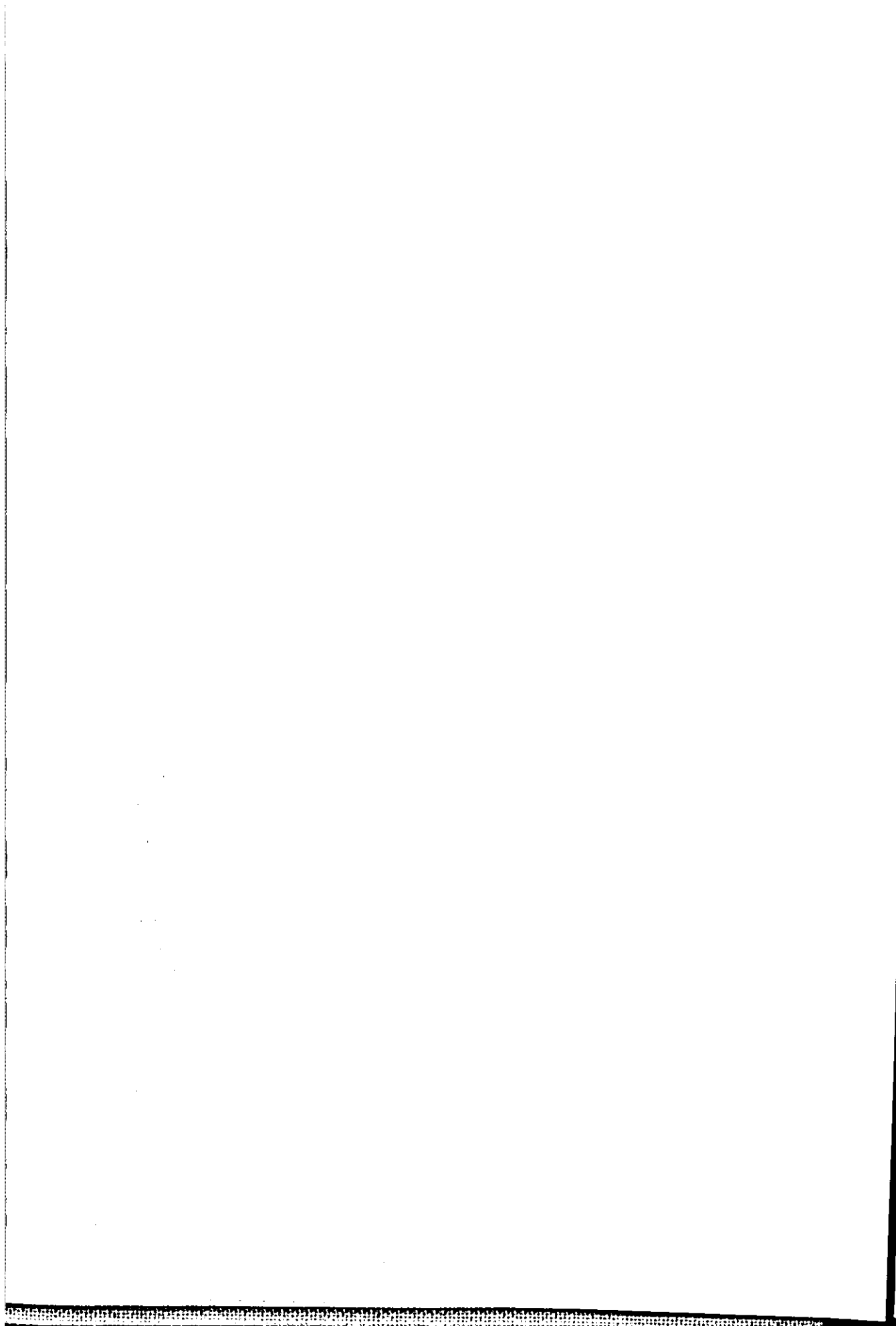
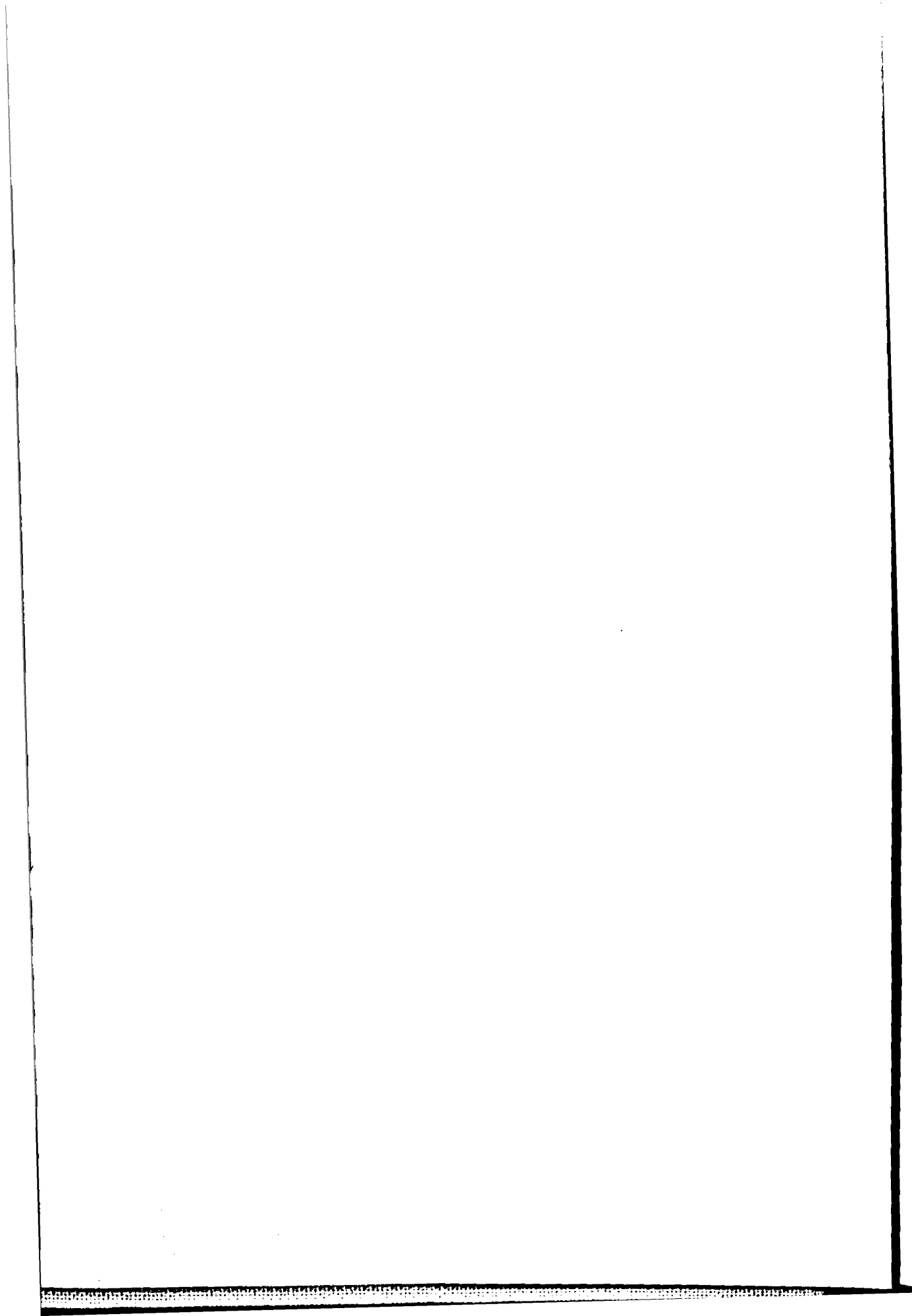


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Eirinn Larsen / Bergen – Florence January 2005

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Abbreviations

bac	baccalauréat
BI	Bedriftsøkonomisk Institutt / Norwegian School of Management
BHG	Bergen Handelsgymnasium / Bergen Commercial Gymnasium
CCIP	Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris
CHF	Christiania Handelstandsforening / The Association of the Commercial Estate of Christiania
CHG	Christiania Handelsgymnasium / The Commercial Gymnasium of Christiania
CI	Christiania Handelsinstitutt / The Commercial Institute of Christiania
CGC	Confédération générale des cadres
CPA	Centre de Préparation aux Affaires
EAP	École des Affaires de Paris
ENA	École Normale Supérieure
ESCAE	Écoles Supérieures de Commerce et d'Administration des Entreprises
ESCP	École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris
ESSEC	École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales
Ex-A	Examen Artium
FASSFI	Fédération des Associations, Sociétés et Syndicats Français d'Ingénieurs
FNEGE	Fondation Nationale pour l'Enseignement de la Gestion des Entreprises
FNSICS	Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Ingénieurs et de Cadres Supérieurs
GSCD	Groupement Professionnel de Diplômés de Grandes Écoles et Facultés Collaborateurs du Commerce et de l'Industrie
HEC	École des Hautes Études Commerciales
HECJF	École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles
IAE	Institut d'Administration des Entreprises
ISA	Institut Supérieure des Affaires
INSEAD	Institut Supérieur Européen d'Administration des Affaires
NBF	Norsk Bedriftsøkonomisk Forening / The Norwegian Society of Business Economics

NHF	Norges Handelstands Fellesforbund / The Joint-Association of the Commercial Estate
NHH	Norges Handelshøyskole / Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration
NKF	Norsk Kvinnesaksforening / The Norwegian Feminist Association
NSF	Norske Siviløkonomers Forening / The Association of 'Civil Economists'
NTH	Norges Tekniske Høyskole / The Norwegian Technical University
NTNU	Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet / The Norwegian University of Technology and Science
MLF	Mouvement de Libération des Femmes
OHG	Oslo Handelsgymnasium / Oslo Commercial Gymnasium
THG	Trondhjems/Trondheims Handelsgymnasium / Trondheim Commercial Gymnasium
UAESC	Union des Associations des Anciens Élèves des Écoles Supérieures de Commerce
UGE	Union des Grandes Écoles
UiB	Universitetet i Bergen / University of Bergen
UiO	Universitetet i Oslo / University of Oslo
UNEC	Union Nationale des Diplômés d'Ecoles Economiques et Commerciales
X	École Polytechnique

History is about men and women who live in time and place. Time and place affect them, and they affect their times.

*E. Weber*¹

CHAPTER ONE

Untangling the Invisible

In Europe, the term “business school” is often associated with the post-war admiration of the American model of industrial production. Large-scale manufacturing in combination with professional managers, who are trained in the subjects of management and business administration, are the key features of this model. Institutions like Institut Supérieur Européen d’Administration des Affaires (INSEAD), the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) and the London Business School (LBS) were all results of the European fascination with the American model of both business education and middle-class living.² Established in the late 1950s and 1960s, these schools aimed at providing Europe with new knowledge and competitive managers. Through extensive training in general management, the objective was to reduce the so-called “managerial gap” between Europe and the US.

Far less known than the Americanization of European business education, however, is the history of the old “European” business school – or business schools, as they have tended to exist under many different names and designations. In Italian it was known as *Scuola Superiore di Commercio*, in French *École Supérieure de Commerce* and in German *Handelshochschule*.³ The Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, have to a

¹ Weber, Eugene (1991): 12.

² The Financial Times in 2000 and 2001 ranked these three institutions as the best European business schools. See Haldor Byrkjeflot (2001): 149 – 150.

³ Fauri, Francesca (1998): 38, Meyer, Heinz-Dieter (1998): 19.

large extent copied the German model, thus also the designation, which is *handelshøyskole* in Norwegian, *handelskøjskole* in Danish and *handels högskola* in Swedish. The nineteenth-century "European" business school provides the starting point of the study presented in this dissertation, which takes a comparative focus on its development in France and Norway.

The 'European' Business School

European business education has a history which extends far beyond the heydays of post-war reconstruction under American influence. As early as in the 1880s, and thus before the MBA program at Harvard even existed, business schools could be found in many European towns and cities.⁴ France and Norway were, in this respect, no exception. The Christiania Commercial Gymnasium (CHG), located in the Norwegian capital, and the Parisian École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) both opened in this period, preparing young men for careers in the commercial sectors.⁵ Hence, one of the major aims of the early business schools in Europe was to provide businessmen with a professional identity. In a time when degrees and titles were increasingly important for one's middle-class status, building business schools stood out as an important social-professional strategy for the male business community. That the schools accepted only male applicants was, therefore, nothing but "natural". As careers and business management were looked upon as male virtues, there were no reason to include "the

⁴ MBA = Master of Business Education.

The concept "business school" is first and foremost used to denote (pre-experience) business studies on a higher level, leading towards a diploma that has come to carry different names in various European countries. In contrast to the American or Anglo-Saxon connotation of the term, which is linked to the graduate programs offered by American business schools like Harvard, the European "diploma model" does not distinguish between undergraduate and graduate programs. (The Norwegian system is, for the sake of clarity, converging towards the American undergraduate – graduate model the academic year 2003/2004.) Although the official names of European business schools have changed somewhat over time and between countries, they were, as far as the period 1870s – 1970s is concerned, most often referred to as *les écoles supérieures de commerce* (Sup de Co) in French, and *handels gymnas* and later *handels høyskoler* in Norwegian. I am aware of the fact that somebody might find it strange to use the concept "business school" when writing about Europe, especially when the term itself was foreign to most Norwegians and French until the 1960s. But as this thesis is written English, I have found no way out of this dilemma. In order to distinguish between the European diploma/business-school model and the American, I thus refer to the latter as "the American business school" – or simply the "American model".

⁵ Christiania (spelled Kristiania from 1877) was the official name of the Norwegian capital until it changed to Oslo in 1925. The Commercial Gymnasium of Christiania then changed its name into the Commercial Gymnasium of Oslo (OHG).

second sex". But as time went on, single middle-class women in search of employment increasingly challenged institutions of higher business learning, in France as well as in Norway.

As many other scholars have shown, office work underwent a massive feminization in the early 1900s, with secretarial work moving from being a male to a female occupation.⁶ This was to have a major impact on the applications to both elementary and intermediate commercial education, but it also affected enrollment to the higher levels. The Norwegian CHG, for instance, underwent a rapid feminization in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁷ So did some of the French business schools, like the *École Supérieure de Commerce de Rouen*, located in the province, as the Great War had severe consequences for French society.⁸ Needless to say, the rapid decline in the male population made marriage nothing but a remote dream for many. To open the business schools for female applicants was, consequently, a way of preparing young middle-class women for clerical work, and thus enabling them to make a living on their own if this were needed. But as we shall see, this never took place in the French capital, however, nor at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), which opened in Bergen in 1936.

Graduating from one of these two schools was for long synonymous with being male, although the reasons for the male dominance were a bit different at HEC than at NHH. With respect to the former, the male hegemony was the result of a gender bar which lasted until 1973, preventing any woman from applying. At the Norwegian NHH, there were no such restrictions. All the same, the student population remained almost completely masculine until the early 1970s, when women entered institutions of higher learning to a greater extent. But from this moment onwards, things also began to change for the "male" business schools. Both HEC and NHH underwent a glaring feminization during the 1970s, and by the mid-80s, the percentage of female students had reached approximately 40% both places, while it today is closer to 45% (Table 1).

⁶ Kwolek-Folland, Angel (1994); (1998), Strom, Sharon H. (1992), Fløystad, Ingeborg (1986), Gardey, Delphine (1995); (2001), Gro Hagemann (1997), Melby, Kari (1999), Strømberg, Erling (1984), Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle (1996), Crompton, Rosemary (1995), Daies, Margery W. (1982), Geertsen, Kirsten (1990).

⁷ See Appendix 8, Table I.

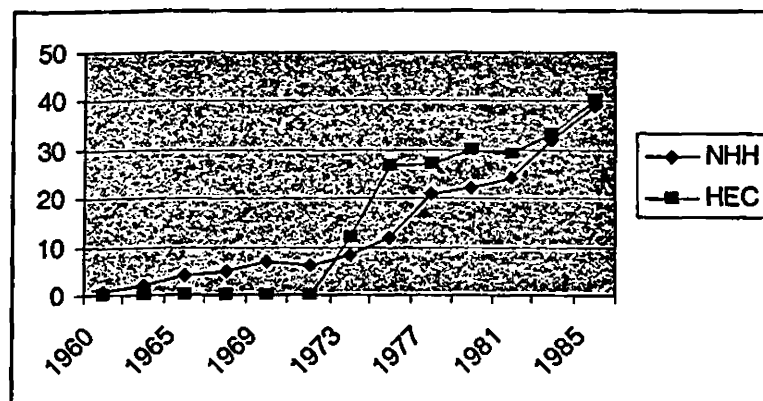


Table 1: The proportion (in percentage) of female students admitted at NHH and HEC; 1960 – 1985.⁹

This dissertation studies *how* and *why* business schools like HEC and NHH maintained its masculine outlook over time, while other institutions of higher business learning did not. The emphasis hence is on the importance of masculinity – or gender in general – in processes of professionalization and elite-construction. Its point of departure is that professionalization is a social strategy based on gender-neutral premises, centered on protecting certain positions or types of work from intruders who do not fulfill the “right” entry requirements in terms of education, qualification and knowledge base.¹⁰ The problem with business or moneymaking, however, was that it only represented a codified knowledge to a small extent at the turn of last century. Neither was buying and selling reserved for men as such, like many other occupations. Also women engaged in small-scale trade, either alone or in cooperation with their husbands and families. And women were also in possession of the basic commercial and clerical skills – such as bookkeeping and accounting, typewriting and stenography. In such circumstances, excluding women from business-school attendance, as was the case at the Parisian HEC until 1973, but also at CHG until 1903, resulted not from the professional rules of the game. Instead the schools made use of alternative strategies, like gender strategies, to provide their students with a professional “self”, and thus a social status as middle-class men.

⁸ See Chapter 5. The number of female students went, however, down in the 1950s, but thereafter increased again in the mid-60s. See Appendix 4, Table II.

⁹ For sources see, Appendix 3, and for the feminization of institutions similar to NHH and HEC, see Appendix 3 and 8.

Male Professionalization during the Industrial Era

The expansion of institutions of higher learning was not unique to the business realm in the late-nineteenth century. Other socio-professional fields like engineering experienced a similar, if not stronger, growth of educational institutions, turning individuals into middle-class professionals. France, for instance, possessed far more engineering schools than schools of commerce at the turn of last century. And Norway – despite being a latecomer to industrialization – got a technical university long before a national business school even existed. At the same time, the business schools faced a continuous challenge of providing their graduates with a professional field of action, through which they could legitimize – morally speaking – their moneymaking business, or climb the corporate ladder as administrators and top-managers. For a long time, managerial positions were reserved for family members or graduates of engineering, not of business administration. Indeed, neither French nor Norwegian business schools have managed to secure fully their students a professional monopoly of the kind that exists within engineering and the liberal professions. Even today, when higher business education attracts considerably more students than the field of technical education, a business-school degree gives few, if any, professional or occupational guarantees of employment.

Nevertheless, significant shares of the current managerial elite in the two countries are graduates of business, not engineering.¹¹ Graduates of top business schools like HEC and NHH have in particular managed to climb high in the managerial hierarchy. Thus, one might ask how – and why – this came to happen, and to what extent it had to do with gender, or masculinity, particularly as the feminization of these two schools took place not only in tandem with the mass-entry of young women into higher university studies, but it also coexisted with the decline of the relative importance of (civil) engineering as a form of management education, in favor of business graduates

¹⁰ Florin, Christina (2004): 199.

¹¹ Gammelsæter. Hallgeir (1990), Bjarnar, Ove & Hallgeir Gammelsæter (1995), Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 423, Table 11.1, Nioche, Jean Pierre (1996), Engwall, Lars & Vera Zamagni (eds. 1998), Byrkjeflot, Haldor (2001). According to the historian Rolv Petter Amdam, graduates holding the title *siviløkonom* ("civil economist") made major advancements in the managerial hierarchies of Norwegian firms during the 1970s. And at the end of the 1980s, this degree had become the most common educational background of Norwegian top-managers. Business graduates' entrance into top management occurred a bit later in France than in Norway, due to the hegemonic position of certain elite-schools of engineering like Polytechnique, Centrale and Mines in the screening of top managers. Business graduates from the Parisian business school the École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) are, however, the most successful ones.

from HEC and NHH. In other words, at the time the two business schools began providing top-managers, it underwent also a sizable feminization, indicating that it until this time they had been exclusively male, just as institutions of higher technical learning were.¹²

Engineering remained, to a large extent, the most difficult of all professions to enter for women in the twentieth century, thus excluding them from both the material development and the managerial structuring of the corporate process.¹³ In order to understand this similarity between engineering and certain business schools, such as the French HEC and the Norwegian NHH, and thus develop the research question further regarding the importance of masculinity in processes of professionalization and elite-construction, the historical shift from engineering to business studies as management education is relevant.¹⁴ The essential query is *why* this took place.

The male engineer gained, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a predominant position in French and Norwegian manufacturing, notwithstanding the existence of a very different educational system or logic in the two countries, which affected the perception or value of engineering as managerial knowledge. While general culture and high degree of selectivity through attendance at one of the *grande écoles* were crucial values in France, technical knowledge, in combination with practical or on-the-shop-floor experiences, played a much greater role in Norway. French technical schools have also taken a generalist approach to the teaching and study of engineering. The managerial authority of engineers has, for this reason, mainly been based on their role as generalists, in combination with educational merits and institutional belonging, whereas

¹² The number of female students in French and Norwegian schools of engineering is still considerably lower than in higher business education. See Appendix 1, Table 1, and Appendix 2.

¹³ Strom, Sharon Hartman (1992): 77. It is possible that engineering was considered differently in communist countries, such as the Soviet Union. But, even today, this field and profession has managed to conserve some of its masculine connotations, even if the mute – and naïve – admiration for technology and progress has diminished considerably. Most engineering schools are, for example, still male dominated. This fact reinforces the notion of engineering as a male construct, linked to science and rationalism, abstraction and linear thinking.

¹⁴ The phrase “management education” signifies the educational institutions regarded as the relevant actors in the business of educating top managers in larger companies. This understanding is based on the function of the educational institutions in relation to industry and business, not the topics or subjects taught. Management education is therefore considered as something different than education in management. For more on this issue, see Lars Engwall & Elving Gunnarsson (eds. 1994), Haldor Byrkjeflot (1997); (2001).

Norwegian engineers have generally been viewed as technical specialists.¹⁵ This is not to say that institutional belonging had no practical implications for engineers also in Norway. To graduate from the Norwegian Technical University (NTH), which opened in 1910, was for a long time highly regarded, simply because it was the only institution of higher technical learning in the country. The professional opportunities achieved by attending this school however were still incomparable with the privileges obtained by graduating from one of the French elite schools, such as École Polytechnique (X), École de Mines and École Centrale.

With the decline of manufacturing in the 1970s, and the rise of a so-called post-industrial economy, engineers lost their ability to dominate higher management to the advantage of graduates of business. The shift from civil engineering to business studies as management education was particular evident in Norway, where business graduates made major advancements already during the 1970s, after which time it became the most common educational background of Norwegian executives and business managers by the late 1980s.¹⁶ But also in France, where certain *grandes écoles* of engineering and the state-run École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) have had strong positions in the screening of top-managers, business graduates have in recent times had major successes in the field of management. In particular those graduating from the Parisian HEC, but also students of the École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (ESSEC) have risen to high positions in the world of business and finance.¹⁷

The emerging success of business graduates in management has primarily been interpreted as a consequence of the changes in production, economic policies and market relations, in addition to the emergence of new organizational structures and strategies.¹⁸ For instance, the introduction of the M-form in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s has often been understood as a change that benefited business graduates, because it, for one thing, held that financial control was critical for preserving growth and profitability

¹⁵ Grelon, André (1993): 42. This can of course be explained by the fact that France developed schools of engineering very early (in the late-18th century), and that these institutions were created to train suitable people for employment in the service of the crown – and later the Republic – and not industry as in Norway. For more on this see chapter 3.

¹⁶ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 423, Table 11,1.

¹⁷ Nioche, Jean Pierre (1996), Engwall, Lars & Vera Zamagni (eds. 1998), Byrkjeflot, Haldor (2001).

¹⁸ Gammelsæter, Hallgeir (1990), Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998), Djelic, Marie-Laure (1998). M-form = multidivisional structure or “divisionalized” firms.

within the firm.¹⁹ The Norwegian historian Rolv Petter Amdam, inspired by Neil Fligstein's work on phases of American capitalism, argues that in the Norwegian context, management competence on production control was replaced by a new focus on sales and marketing in the 1960s and 1970s, and financial control throughout the 1980s.²⁰ This demanded that business managers had new forms of knowledge, a demand that, according to Amdam, favored graduates of higher business studies in particular, trained as they were in subjects like business economics, marketing and administration.²¹

French scholars have made similar interpretations as to why graduates of business have become very competent in the areas of market – or financial – coordination, in the latter part of the twentieth century.²² But, in contrast to the interpretation provided by Amdam of the importance of the business candidates as specialists in Norway, French students of higher business learning have always been considered – as well as trained – as “generalists”. The decline of the relative importance of engineering skills in favor of commercial and financial ones, following the move away from production-dominated structures in the 1960s, can for this reason not only be interpreted as being to the benefit of business graduates as specialists versus generalists. In other words, the given explanations are more than incompatible. The entry of business graduates into French and Norwegian management as from the late 1970s onwards, was not a wide-ranging trend, encompassing business candidates in general. Essentially, it applied first and foremost for graduates of HEC in France, and holders of the degree “civil economist” (*siviløkonom*) in Norway, which NHH was the only school to grant until 1985. Thus, the shifting demand in competence and type of education within business has not made all institutions of higher business learning into providers of top-managers, and thus secured them a so-called elite status. Far from every business school has developed as successfully as HEC and NHH have, providing their graduates with high social status and admiration, in addition to an almost-guaranteed professional outlet at a higher managerial level.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 32 – 33, 434 – 435, Fliegstein, Niel (1987): 50. Strikingly, the move to financial control in the 1970s turned the business ethos away from production to profit. According to Fliegstein this was initially a result of growing public demand for transparency in the financial records of the firms, and not a new acceptance of the discourse of shareholder value that dominating business thinking in the 1980s.

²¹ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 426, CEMP Report 12.

A comparative approach hence reveals that none of the hitherto historical analyses of the move from engineering to business studies as a form of management education, are capable of fully grasping the “victory” of some establishments over others, neither analytically nor empirically. Subsequently, there must be more to the story of the success of business graduates in the late-twentieth century than the importance of competence, expertise and skills – the gender-neutral premises of professionalization. This makes it both legitimate and necessary to move beyond the fact that both institutions provided young people with managerial skills. In addition, we have to look for the qualities and characteristics those successful institutions and graduates, despite different curricula, academic orientations and conflicting scholarly interpretations, have come to share. Gender – or masculinity – is a characteristic of this kind. This quality is made visible not only by comparing the gender balance of the students over time as well as place, but also by relating the development of higher business education to the wider social and cultural changes which took place at the turn of last century. Hence, the overall historical framework of this dissertation is modernization and democratization, rather than industrialization within two European countries.

The Value of Comparative History

To compare synchronically is not only an efficient way of asking new questions about “old stories”, or the historical interpretations that accompany them. Comparative history is, in the way I see it, also very helpful when trying to reveal historical processes or phenomena that are difficult to spot with the naked eye, like the elite-status of HEC and NHH in the late-twentieth century and the role of masculinity.²³ Marc Bloch once said that the comparative method is comparable to an analytical tool for historians, because it enables them to see their study object in a wider perspective.²⁴ In line with this reasoning, the historical-comparative method has the aim – as well as advantage – of getting a deeper understanding of an issue or a historical phenomenon through adding a synchronic dimension to the vertical. In addition, it can be used to generate new explanations to old

²² Withley, Richard et al (1984), Meuleau, Marc (1992), Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle & Fabienne Pavis (2001).

²³ Dunlavy, Colleen A. (1993): 14.

²⁴ Bloch, Marc (1928), Élgan, Elisabeth (1994).

questions; in this case the social practices and strategies that secured the success of certain business graduates in management, like those of HEC and NHH.

Comparative history hence distinguishes itself from certain types of comparative sociology – or the social sciences in general – by not aiming at developing a general theory of macro-social variations. Some historians have tried to underline this epistemological point or position by avoiding the characteristic “methodology” when defining comparative history. The German historians Heinz Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka are among those. In the introductory chapter to the anthology *Geschichte und Vergleich*, Haupt and Kocka write about historical comparisons as a distinct perspective employed by historians to develop comprehensive descriptions and explanations of historical experiences and *Zusammenhängen*.²⁵ To me, the relationship and/or difference between method and description is unclear, however. Even if one could argue that specific methodologies evolve as part of an explicit theoretical orientation, a perspective seems to be more directly connected – or subordinated – to a general theory than a method. The analytical distinction between perspective and method hence is neither evident nor solid enough to make it a key reference point for distinguishing between comparative history, on the one hand, and the comparative social sciences, on the other hand. Comparative history is, in other words, not a distinctive perspective. In contrast, it provides students of history with *perspective*, by relating the object of study to not only one historical context, but to two or several contexts.²⁶

The main object of the study presented in this dissertation is the “European” business school in France and Norway. The comparative scope does not mean, however, that the French and Norwegian Nation-States are used or seen as explanatory factors. Rather they are considered as discursive and explanatory spaces.²⁷ The comparative approach is essentially employed to shed new light on a historical phenomenon, which from a phenomenological point of view is the same, but which happened to develop in many European countries simultaneously, France and Norway included. An approach of this kind has the advantage that it enables me to pinpoint not only the interplay between various shaping factors, such as universal factors and more “cultural-specific” ones. It is

²⁵ Haupt, Heinz Gerhard Haupt & Jürgen Kocka (1996): 6.

²⁶ For more on the comparative method and history, see Francis Sejersted (2003).

²⁷ Korsnes, Olav (1996).

also a useful methodology in helping to make the invisible forces visible in the subject of higher business learning in Europe, i.e. gender, and the fact that the process of professionalization to a large extent was the same as masculinization for certain institutions within this field. The strategies used – consciously or unconsciously – to preserve or defend the schools' masculine outlooks are therefore at the core of this work. The Norwegian and the French business schools seemed to have represented two varieties of a European pattern, especially in relation to the “conservation” or safeguarding of masculinity, and it is the aim of the dissertation to analyze these varieties.

The title of this dissertation – “Invisible Strategies” – might therefore sound incongruous. Strategies are commonly understood as the product of conscious action and thinking, and institutions of higher business studies are both tangible and settled. In spite of that, the title calls attention to the essence of the social practices, but also to the cultural – and highly gendered – modes of representation that helped to give birth to the Norwegian and French business schools which are studied in this dissertation, and to the success of HEC and NHH in particular. In Norway as well as in France, the emergence of institutions of higher business learning can be linked to a specific gendered discourse on professionalism, which came about as a result of the rise of the nineteenth-century “bourgeois man” and his professional ethos.²⁸ The Parisian HEC and the Norwegian NHH, including its institutional forerunner Christiania Commercial Gymnasium (CHG), hence were anything but isolated cases in the emergence of the European middle class(es). On the contrary, they were part of a series of moves and social practices that businessmen undertook in their search for professional recognition and legitimacy, but were objectively organized as strategies but which were not the product of a genuine strategic intention, to quote Pierre Bourdieu.²⁹

The period under historical and comparative examination spans from 1870 to 1980, in other words, from the emergence of higher business education in both countries to its feminization. In terms of research, this implies an in-depth study of some key Norwegian and French – or Parisian – providers of higher business education over time. Apart from the need to limit the scope of the study, the distinction between the French

²⁸ Kocka, Jürgen (1993): 30.

²⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre (1972/1977): 73.

and the Parisian business schools is a consequence of a long-lasting social and cultural boundary drawn between Paris and the province. In what follows we shall see that this line of differentiation affected the institutionalization of higher business education, too. In Norway, the distinction between the capital and the province was somehow less apparent, however. Compared to France, Norway stood forward as a fairly decentralized country at the turn of last century, in particular after the union with Sweden was dissolved in 1905. The development of the field of higher business studies commenced, nonetheless, in its capital Oslo, or Christiania as was its name back then. But before entering these two courses of events, a better insight in the various theoretical perspectives, but also into the empirical material upon which the dissertation draws, is needed. This is the object of the following chapter.

Men make their living and their reputation in the world; women tend the hearth and raise the children. That division of labour has seldom been absolute, and today more than ever is regarded as a shackle from the past rather than a rational basis for society. But the underlying assumption about the proper – or ‘natural’ – roles of men and women has been profoundly influential in most cultures and in most periods of history.

*J. Tosh*³⁰

CHAPTER TWO

On the Study of Gender and Business Education

The last two decades have witnessed a growing research interest in the role of European business schools as providers of management education.³¹ Initially, this scholarship developed in the intersection between business history and organizational studies, comparing systems of business and management education within and across countries. There is, however, a weak tradition among scholars of business education of including women or gender in their studies. The historical fact that business schools like HEC and NHH for a long time educated only men has therefore been given little – if any – attention by mainstream scholars of business education. The rise of the modern business school has instead been related to structural changes in the corporation, such as the

³⁰ Tosh, John (1999): 1.

³¹ Locke, Robert (1984); (1989); (1996); & Marc Meuleau (1988); Engwall, Lars (1992); (2000); & Elving Gunnarsson (1994); & Vera Zamagni (eds. 1998), Amdam, Rolv Petter (eds. 1996); (1997); (1998a); & Ove Bjarnar (1998b) & Gunnar Yttri; (1999); & Ragnhild Kvålshaugen, Eirinn Larsen (eds. 2003), Kvålshaugen, Ragnhild (2001), Byrkjeftot, Haldor (ed. 1997); (1998); (1999); (2000); Kipping, Mathias (1998), Gourish, Terry & Nick Tiratsoo (1998), Gemelli, Giuliana (ed. 1998), Saint Martin, Monique & Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu (eds. 1997), Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle & Fabienne Pavis (2001). This is just to mention some references. A different strand of research on the topic of business education has a point of departure in institutional histories, and these are often written in connection with jubilees. Examples here are: Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975), Wilson, John (1992), Amdam, Rolv Petter (1993), Meuleau, Marc (1981), Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnliot Strømme Svendsen (1986), Scieb, Pierre-Alain (1991).

“managerial revolution” and the invention of systematic, and rational, practices of management in the twentieth century.³²

Historians of women and gender have, on the other hand, shown little interest in “engendering” a historical phenomenon like business education. With the exception of the DEA-thesis of Marielle Delorme-Hoechstetter, concerning the institutional genesis of the female version of HEC, i.e. École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF), created in 1916, business education is a completely unexplored field of research within the field of gender history, at least in Europe.³³ In order to bridge the theoretical gap between these two sub-disciplines of historical research, I have come to draw extensively on the writings of the American feminist historian Joan W. Scott. In particular her definition of gender, as the *meaning* given to bodily differences, and as “a primary way of signifying relationship of power”, has been helpful in order to read masculinity – as much as femininity – into the existing scholarship on business education.³⁴

The impact of Scott’s theoretical writings on the research that follows justifies a more thorough presentation of her scholarship. Thus, the first part of this chapter has the ambition to give a brief introduction to the field of gender history, through Scott. Secondly, the interrelation between business history and historical research on business education is presented. The aim at this point is to discuss critically the gaps and shortcomings of this mode of research from a gender perspective, and therefore put forward my own approach to the issue. From this point of departure, I return to the research focus with the intent of formulating some key hypotheses that will guide the

³² *The Creation of European Management Practice* (1997 – 2001), financed by the European Commission and led by Lars Engwall, Uppsala University, José-Luis Alvarez, IESE – Barcelona, Rolv Petter Amdam, Norwegian School of Management – BI, Matthias Kipping, Reading University, was my first encounter with this scholarship. A key hypothesis in this EU-financed assignment was that European business education was to converge, due to increased internationalization and globalization within business and academia. Believing that these external factors, accelerated by the process of European integration, might have had a standardizing effect on business management across Europe, the CEMP project looked for a counterforce to the American business-school model, which had fuelled the European business-school experience since the late 1950s. For more on the result of this project, see Rolv Petter Amdam, Ragnhild Kvålshaugen & Eirinn Larsen (eds. 2003), Haldor Byrkjeflot (2001), Amdam, Rolv Petter, Eirinn Larsen & Ragnhild Kvålshaugen (2000), Engwall, Lars et al (2002).

³³ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995), Walsh, Maggie (2002): 3. There has been a general shortage of historians interested in gendering business history in Europe. Most progress combining the two has taken place in the US. Most of them have, on the other hand, been occupied with the business office, not business education *per se*. See for example Angel Kwolek-Folland (1994); (1998), Sharon H. Strom (1992).

comparison that follows, which will be followed by a brief outline. Finally, the sources made use of when writing this thesis are considered.

Defining Gender and Gender History

When Scott published her famous article “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” in 1986, her aforementioned definition of gender confirmed in many ways a shift of focus already taken place within the scholarship of women’s history; i.e. the replacement of the category women with that of gender.³⁵ Arguing for the fundamental social and cultural quality of the difference between men and women, this term enabled historians of women and feminism to approach sexual differences and inequalities without having to deal with biological determinism, which is implicit in terms like “sex” or “sexual” difference. By doing so, feminist scholars denied that biological facts could legitimize social norms. But the extensive use of gender was not only marked by a need to separate between the biologically given sex, and the socially-constructed gender, between nature and culture, but this change from women into gender was probably also an attempt – consciously or unconsciously – to gain academic recognition and legitimacy. Compared to “women”, the term “gender” carried more neutral or objective connotations. Whereas an analytical focus on women in history was highly motivated and linked to the feminist movement of the 1970s, which claimed that history had referred only to men’s experiences, gender offered a continuation of this focus but in less provocative and political terms.³⁶ The basic argument behind this move was that gender was a social

³⁴ Scott, Joan W. (1986/1988): 42.

³⁵ See also Jane Rendell (1991), Gisela Bock (1989), (1991); Ida Blom (1994). The anthropologist Gayle Rubin was among the first though, to use the grammatical term gender, as opposed to the biological given sex. In the article “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex”, from 1975, Rubin emphasized the biological sex and the culturally created gender through her theory of the “sex – gender system”, in Rayna R. Reiter ed. (1975): 157 – 210.

³⁶ The relationship between the modern feminist movement and the formation of women’s history as an historical discipline is often made when accounting for the diffusion of women’s history across the world. Both within Norwegian and French historiography this link is stressed as an explanation as to why women’s history developed in the first place. For examples of this in the two countries see Ingeborg Fløystad (1991), and Michelle Perrot (ed. 1984/1992). Other fields of history, such as social history, demographic history, the history of mentalities and family history, seem in some countries to be as influential and active in the emergence and shaping of women’s – and later gender – history. In France, women’s history was connected to or integrated in the studies of *les longues durées* and the Annales-school of Braudel, meaning that it also developed from a more general and established interest or trend among historians. In other places, such as the US, a social history “from below”, often in combination with materialistic theories such as Marxism, served in the beginning as a partner for women’s history. How tight

construction that embraces all areas of society and which, therefore, cannot be reduced to factors outside of history or isolated to the study of women. Also men are marked by the ways in which society and culture had defined them as "gendered" beings. Hence, a focus on gender would not simply add a new subject matter to history, men and masculinity, as had previously been the case with women's history, but it would also force a critical re-examination of the premises and standards of existing scholarly work, women's historians argued in the early 1980s.

Until Scott's groundbreaking article appeared in 1986, gender studies within history, including women's and gender history, was however a largely descriptive or causal matter. Indeed, the category of gender had most often worked as a synonym for "women" without really changing perspective or method. In the opinion of Scott, such studies had asserted that the relationships between the sexes were relational without saying anything about how they were constructed and worked. Although some historians had been aware of this problem, and tried to solve it by using other theories, Scott argued that none of these seemed entirely adequate for historians.³⁷ One major reason for this was that many of these approaches, such as patriarchal theories and psychoanalysis, defined and reinforced the woman – man dyad as a universal, self-producing binary opposition. Hence, by focusing on fixed differences, feminist historians tended to contribute to the kind of thinking they wanted to oppose. They wrote, so to speak, the history of "difference", strengthening instead of refusing the hierarchical constructions of the relationships between men and women.³⁸ Thus, questioning and theorizing the scholarly practices of feminist historians, was a precondition for introducing gender as an analytical category. Scott continued:

the relationship between these two types of activities – or activism – originally was, is to some extent unclear, and thus also debatable. What seems evident, however, is that many of the initiators for women's history in the 1970s took actively part in the women's liberation movement themselves. The Norwegian historian Gro Hagemann has questioned the link itself as much as the making of it. See *ARR: Idehistorisk tidsskrift* Nr. 4 (1996): 50 – 55. This connection is, however, quite evident in Hagemann's own scholarship, something Pernille Arenfeldt and I have pointed out (see Pernille Arenfeldt & Eirinn Larsen, 2003).

³⁷ Patriarchal theories, feminist critiques of Marxism, psychoanalysis etc.

³⁸ Scott, Joan (1988a): 41.

We need theory that will break the conceptual hold, at least, of those long traditions of (Western) philosophy that have systematically and repeatedly constructed the worlds hierarchically in terms of masculine universals and feminine specificities.³⁹

Scott was, in other words, seeking out alternative ways of thinking about and articulating gender, alternatives that neither reversed the old hierarchies nor confirmed them in the ways feminist historians had in their earliest writings.

The theory which best met these requirements in the late 1980s was post-structuralism. According to Scott, only post-structuralist thinking offered a way of analyzing the construction of meanings and relationships of power that called “unitary, universal categories into question and historized concepts otherwise treated as natural (man and woman) or absolute (equality and justice)”.⁴⁰ The space opened up by post-structuralists, in their critique of empiricism and humanism, therefore, served explicitly as the place where Scott articulated gender in the late 1980s – an articulation that has had a major impact on the attempt to read gender into new historical disciplines, like business history.⁴¹ She followed in particular the writings of Michel Foucault and his emphasis on knowledge as the understanding of human relationship produced by cultures.⁴² As a result, gender was defined as knowledge, too – as knowledge about sexual differences, whereas gender history, in the broadest sense of the word, meant to analyze and explain the importance of ideas on gender in any historical context.⁴³ In the words of the American Angel Kwolek-Folland, a pioneer in the field of gender and business history, gender historians are concerned with the construction and experiences of gender. She says:

Historians of gender investigate how societies and individuals have defined and experienced womanhood and manhood, femaleness and maleness. These studies encompass the normative prescription for gendered behavior, the development of social identities, the relations between gender and the political economy, and the engendering of institutions.⁴⁴

³⁹ Scott, Joan (1988b): 33.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 34.

⁴¹ Kwolek-Folland, Angel (2001), Walsh, Maggie (2002).

⁴² Foucault, Michel (1972).

⁴³ Scott, Joan (1988a): 9- 10, Blom, Ida (1991): 139.

⁴⁴ Kwolek-Folland, Angel (2001): 1 – 2.

But what does it mean to write women's or gender history from the post-structuralist stand articulated by Scott in the late 1980s? And in what ways have her writings shaped my ways of approaching the current project?

Post-Structuralism – A Challenge for Historians of 'Difference'

Post-structuralism and modern feminism are both late-twentieth century movements, which share a certain self-conscious critical relationship to established philosophical and political traditions. It was this common concern, Scott urged, that feminist scholars should use for their own interests. In the article "Deconstruction equality – versus – difference: or, the use of poststructuralist theory for feminism", published in 1988, she offered in fact a short list of major theoretical points that she found useful for feminist inquiry.⁴⁵ These points can in general be recapitulated by terms like the Foucaultian *discourse*, which involves the historically, socially and institutionally specific structures of statements, terms, categories and beliefs. *Language* as a meaning-constituting system, and *difference* as a constitutive element of meaning, because meaning is made through implicit or explicit contrasts (binary oppositions), and finally, Jacques Derrida's *deconstruction*, used as a way of analyzing the operations of differences in text or the ways in which meaning is made to work. By using deconstruction as a method, Scott argued that feminist scholars would be able to show that the dichotomous terms such as "man – woman", and "equality – difference" were not natural, but constructed oppositions, made for particular purposes and in particular contexts and times. Deconstruction thus became an important exercise, because "it allows us to be critical of the way in which ideas we want to use are ordinarily expressed, exhibited in patterns of meaning that may undercut the ends we seek to attain".⁴⁶

One example of how the construction of binary oppositions has served feminist policies and strategies, is in the old debate on equality versus difference within feminism as well as in feminist scholarship, which dates back to the late-nineteenth century and the

⁴⁵ Scott, Joan (1988b).

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 38.

political struggle for women's formal equality with men.⁴⁷ Whereas some feminists demanded female suffrage, in the sense of an identical treatment of women and men, others campaigned for it on the basis of women's distinctive characteristics and experiences. Bringing women into politics was therefore not only a question of social justice. It also brought something new into the political sphere and debate, as women – by the virtue of their sex – represented something essentially different from men.

The thorny aspect of this kind of dichotomous reasoning is, however, that equality and difference seems to structure an impossible choice. "If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable."⁴⁸ Scott's answer to this dilemma of "difference" hence was to question the dichotomy itself, because both ignoring and focusing on difference risked creating it, she argued.⁴⁹ The basic message of hers is, in other words, that instead of remaining within the terms of existing political discourses, one needs to subject those terms that underlie it to critical examination, and

...refuse to oppose equality to difference and insist continually on difference – difference as the condition of individual and collective identities, difference as the constant challenge of the fixing of those identities, history as the repeated illustration of the play of difference, difference as the very meaning of equality itself.⁵⁰

Scott's theoretical writings, and especially her emphasis on "difference as the very meaning of equality itself", have had a major impact on the development of women's and gender history since the late 1980s.⁵¹ Instead of writing traditional women's histories, emphasizing women's different experiences from men, a substantial number of gender historians have come to focus on the historical construction of this difference, and on how women and men's experiences operate in this production. Scott's post-structural insistence on difference refuses not only the type of "her-stories"

⁴⁷ Blom, Ida (1994): 91.

⁴⁸ Scott, Joan (1988a): 172.

⁴⁹ The conceptualization of this the dilemma, i.e. the dilemma of "difference", Scott borrowed from the legal theorist Martha Minow (1984): "Learning to Live with the Dilemma of Difference: Bilingual and Special Education", *Law and Contemporary Problems*.

⁵⁰ Scott, Joan (1988b): 46.

⁵¹ See for instance Marianne Liljeström et al (red. 1993), Gro Hagemann (1994); (2003).

produced in the infancy of women's history, which marked women out as an "other", but it also undercuts the tendency to use the absolutist and essential categories of the sexes.

One can of course argue that a research practice of this kind represents a certain danger, a danger of throwing out the baby with the bath water, i.e. women's past. From my point view, writing women's histories is still of vital importance, and in particular within the field of business history. Historical knowledge about the economic sphere is still very much based on men's experiences, not women's. It seems, on the other hand, reasonable to argue that the watershed that Scott constructed between women's and gender history in 1986 is overrated. Recent developments within the field has shown that there is no either – or at this point, i.e. between accentuating gender as a category of historical analysis and writing the history of women, or men for that sake.⁵²

But unlike some of Scott's opponents, I would not judge her post-structuralist stand as a denial of the fact that gender differences derived from material experiences and interests, and from individual action.⁵³ What it does suggest though, and which I have found very helpful when writing this dissertation, is that these meanings are always relative to particular cultural constructions of difference, made within specified social contexts, times, for specific purposes and by specific actors and groups. Scott excludes, therefore, neither individual nor material forces in favor of the "pure" discourses, as some have tended to argue. Instead, she looks at individuals and groups of actors as part of the institutional environment or context that shapes gender as much as other identity categories like class, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Women and men are, in this way, "both subjects of and subjected to social construction", as Linda Alcoff once put it.⁵⁴ Writing gender history from this kind of a perspective hence means studying male institutions as much as female ones, and the construction of masculinity as much as the construction of femininity. Because dominant ideas of manhood and womanhood have not only formed individual experiences, but they have also created formal institutions like the business schools, and in these ways have contributed powerfully to the discussion as well as social construction of gender.

⁵² Arenfeldt, Pernille & Eirinn Larsen (2003). See especially Chapter 9 in Gro Hagemann (2003).

⁵³ Wetterberg, Christina Carlsson (1992): 34, 38. For more on this, see Gro Hagemann (2003): 83 – 86.

⁵⁴ Alcoff, Linda (1988): 431, referred to in Gro Hagemann (2003): 82.

In France and Norway, higher business education was one institution – among others – that had a strong normative impact on the (re)creation of sexual differences in the field of business management. In the following chapters, the theoretical acknowledgement of gender as knowledge about bodily differences is combined with an interest in women's places and possibilities in this field. Hence, the overall aim of the work presented here is to produce knowledge about the ways in which French and Norwegian higher business education shaped and was shaped by ideas of manhood and womanhood, masculinity and femininity, studied both as “difference” and “sameness” (equality). Still, one might wonder how a social-constructionist perspective of this kind can be combined with mainstream business history, the discipline that more than any other has come to influence the corpus of literature and research on higher business education. Concepts and paradigmatic changes like the linguistic turn and the new cultural history are not necessarily well known and respected by historians of European business education. Rather, they tend to operate within a very “realist” or conventional school of thought, where relatively recent historical categories, such as gender, have gained little interest.

The ‘Chandlerian’ Approach: Business Education as Management Education

Business history, focusing on the internal dynamics of a company's activity, is a much older scholarly discipline than gender history. In most places it derived from economic history, as it developed in many European countries from the late-nineteenth century onward. Yet in the US, business historians have often been located in business schools, teaching case studies for young men preparing a Master of Business Administration (MBA).⁵⁵ Alfred D. Chandler was among the scholars who took this path, and for many years he held the chair of business history at the influential Harvard Business School. During his stay at Harvard, Chandler systematized the discipline of business history by focusing on the large-scale, vertically integrated, and managerially directed business enterprise. The project resulted in a three-volume work, written over a period of more than three decades, and gave a historical account of the emergence and importance of “Big Business” in the industrial development of the US, from the seventeenth century to

⁵⁵ Walsh, Maggie (2002): 5.

modern society.⁵⁶ According to Chandler, the success of the US economy in the twentieth century depended on large and highly integrated firms, as they were dramatically more efficient than the small, family-owned and family-managed companies that previously dominated the economy.⁵⁷ By doing so, he also made claims about the importance of organizational capabilities, in addition to scale and scope, for – and in – economic performances. In other words, economic growth depended not only on the invisible hand of the market, but also on people acting to ensure organizational control. This resulted in the theory of the visible hand of management, as opposed to the invisible one of the market, launched by Adam Smith.

For a long time, views of Chandler's kind stood in sharp contrast to the dominant paradigm of economic thinking, i.e. neo-classical economy, which attributed little importance to the firm, or institutions in general, in explaining economic growth. Among historians of business education, in contrast, the question of economic growth has only been an underlying premise. A more outspoken *raison d'être* is the paradigm of – and belief in – management, in which Chandler's second book, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977) has been the most influential.⁵⁸ In this volume, he accounts for the rise of management as a distinct profession, based on a clearer division between ownership and leadership during the second industrial revolution (1880 – 1920). Historically, this gave birth to graduate business schools like Harvard in the early 1900s, which unlike the older business colleges and high schools, taught business management and organization, not office skills and foreign languages.⁵⁹ But what impact have such ideas had on the study of the movement towards the academic instruction of businessmen?

Approaching business education from a Chandlarian perspective means, first of all, that the development of the modern company, embedded in an industrial bureaucracy, is looked upon as the main impetus for graduate business education. Subsequently, "Big Business" became the only available framework for the study of higher business education, which secondly makes the phenomenon as such a result of corporate demand

⁵⁶ Chandler, Alfred D. (1962); (1977); (1990).

⁵⁷ Lamoreaux, Naomi R. et al (2003): 404.

⁵⁸ One historian of business education building explicitly on Chandler's thesis of the professionalization of management is Rolv Petter Amdam (1998): 10.

for *managerial* skills and knowledge, and (male) business managers. The initial strong tie between the small-scale commercial sector and the business schools has, consequently, been downplayed to the advantage of the intersection between business education and manufacturing. So has the historical continuity with vocational commercial schooling, which in part explains why women have been more or less absent in the literature on business education in general. Unlike graduate business schools like Harvard, lower and middle-level commercial schools were feminized as early as in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, along the mass entry of young women into public and private administration.⁶⁰ This historical past has seldom attracted scholars of business education, however.⁶¹ Due to the importance of Chandler's managerial approach, European scholars of business education have most often emphasized the business schools' aspirations to educate businessmen and managers, not their actual function in relation to training of young men and later women for general office work. This has, bluntly speaking, made only men's experiences visible within the field, at least as long as there were no women among the business graduates selected to climb the managerial ladder, which was the case in most countries until the early 1970s.

Chandler's dominant position within the field of European business history is still not the only reason why the existing scholarship on business education has paid little attention to gender as an explanatory category. As important, I would argue, is the American Robert Locke, an historian of European management education and a former pupil of Chandler's.⁶² But unlike his teacher, who studied economic growth from the perspective of the modern corporation, Locke is, to a large extent, interested in the business school as such – as a non-economic explanation of entrepreneurship and thus the economic performance of countries.

Robert Locke: Business Education as Explanation of Economic Performance

Robert R. Lock's first book on European management education, *The End of the Practical Man* (1984) explores as well as compares the relationship between higher

⁵⁹ Daniel, Carter A. (1998).

⁶⁰ Ibid., Gardey, Delphine (2001), Hagemann, Gro (1994), Kwolek-Folland, Angel (1994), Strom, Sharon (1992).

⁶¹ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 49.

education in engineering and business and entrepreneurial performance in Germany, France and Great Britain, in the period 1880 – 1940. In short, Locke argues that Germany, thanks to a science-driven system of higher education in business and engineering, managed to “catch up”, and later pass, Britain’s dominant position in manufacturing. He says:

Something very basic happened to entrepreneurship in Germany (and in the United States) between 1880 and 1940, something that did not occur in Britain and France. An understanding of the comparative experience is essential if we are to comprehend the economic performance of each country, not only in the late nineteenth century but also to the present day. Higher education has not trained people for business and industrial revolution. It did, however, become important to business and industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when it played a key role in the just mentioned transformation of entrepreneurship.⁶³

Before this book was published, few studies had looked upon the specific correlation between the content of higher education and entrepreneurship, even though the assumption that technological and industrial development depended on education was an old one. Even in the late-nineteenth century, in other words during early industrialization, there were those who claimed a connection between the two, but the degree to which state authorities gave priority to the development of technical education for the purposes of industrial development, differed largely between European countries.⁶⁴ Following Locke, this was also the case in business education, which he, in his 1984 –book, defined as a “cultural phenomenon”.

This means that the acceptance of business studies in each country depends on the ability of that country’s culture to foster and assimilate it. And it also means that the form and the effectiveness of business studies will be, because cultures vary, different in each country.⁶⁵

Among the European countries, only Germany was, from Locke’s point of view, able to develop an educational complement that was essential to modern entrepreneurial

⁶² Locke, Robert (1984); (1989).

⁶³ Ibid. (1984): 22.

⁶⁴ Milward, Alan S. & Sydney B. Saul (1979).

⁶⁵ Locke, Robert (1984): 55

activity.⁶⁶ One example of this superiority was the German *Handelshochschulen* that developed accounting into a science, i.e. business economics in the early-twentieth century. The French business schools, on the other hand, were disastrous. In France, the relationship between higher business education and economic performance was profoundly dysfunctional, Locke writes. As a matter of fact, HEC was the “only French business school of any importance”, until the new – and American – paradigm of management science was imported into them in the 1960s.⁶⁷ This made the French experience of higher business education a complete failure with regard to the aforementioned transformation of entrepreneurship, whereas the German model of business education – which later came to shape the Norwegian experience, was a success.

Locke’s normativity may not be intended, but rather might be the unfortunate side effect of his major aim, which was to examine the relationship between higher education and entrepreneurial performance, or economic growth.⁶⁸ Such a research practice tends to overlook the possibility that those initiating the business schools might have had other educational goals than simply increasing the productivity of the business firm or improving entrepreneurial performance. A major reason for establishing HEC, for example, was to select and form an elite of businessmen from the bourgeois classes, at a time when merit was replacing birth as the legitimate basis for maintaining or achieving social status and privileges. Put simply, this made formal education increasingly important for social respectability among men of the middle classes.⁶⁹ To judge the French business schools solely on the basis of their inability to develop into institutions of applied science, is, therefore, rather simplistic and narrow. As a matter of fact, Locke does not study higher business education as culture and history, as he intended, but as an instrument of economic performance. Rather than addressing the norms, ideas and interests that shape – as well as reshape – these institutions as historical and social products, he measures and evaluates national models of business education and their impact on their respective countries’ economic performances. This limits the use of the

⁶⁶ Ibid.: 22.

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 142.

⁶⁸ It must be said though that Robert Locke has come to reconsider this crucial argument of his. See *The Collapse of the American Management Mystique* (1996), and “Mistaking a Historical Phenomenon for a Functional one: Postwar Management Education Reconsidered”, paper presented at the Conference on Management Education in Historical Perspective, Bologna 25 – 26 October 1996.

premises provided by Locke's, as well as by other scholars who have been inspired by him, when comparing business education across time and place from a gender perspective.

Firstly, his use of science, e.g. business economics, as a normative standard of evaluation, leaves out the vocational aspect of business education. Female commercial schooling, as well as lower and intermediate business education, becomes for this reason invisible, as they do not fulfill Locke's scientific requirements, although the level of the teaching – among contemporaries – was considered to be “high” or “post-gymnasium”. Locke's framework is, moreover, unable to provide good explanations as to how and why a business school like HEC managed to become an elite institution in the long run, besides through its emphasis on “mathematical drilling and selection”.⁷⁰ This indicates that historical analyses of industrial structures and the development of management as an independent profession and science, are insufficient to fully understand the institutional genesis, and thus the institutionalization, of European business schools, the form and content of which differed from country to country. Neither French nor Norwegian business enterprises went through structural changes comparable to those which characterized the American “Big-Business” enterprise up until the post-war period. The structural perspective of mainstream scholars needs, consequently, to be supplemented with an approach that to a larger extent sees the business schools as a cultural product.

Rather than studying the “European” business school as part of the industrialization and bureaucratization of corporate life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and so as a part of the development of modern sciences, I will see it as a social response to the very same processes, led by men of the commercial classes of towns and cities who wanted to make themselves more respected as middle-class men. This social-constructionist approach, inspired by Joan W. Scott, does not reject either the importance of Chandler's focus on the managerial revolution, or Locke's emphasis the business sciences *per se*. What my approach suggests, however, is that the existing scholarship on business education does not fully understand – nor explain – the victory of some European business schools over others, and the success of HEC and NHH in particular.

⁶⁹ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 12, Kocka, Jürgen (1995), Davidoff, Leonore & Catherine Hall (2001).

⁷⁰ Locke, Robert (1984): 142.

The development of academic business instruction for future businessmen was not only due to structural changes within the economy, or new scientific inventions. Just as important was the materialization of new values and norms, and the degree to which the business communities and later business schools managed to institutionalize, and thus practice, these ideals. Rather than seeing gender history and business history as theoretical mis-matches or competitors, the approach presented below thus takes on a complementary view. To bring gender history into the study of higher business education brings, in my opinion, major advantages simply because it unveils the taken-for-granted; i.e. its male norm, and in so doing, helps to reveal its institutional genesis even better.

A Male Middle-Class Movement for Academic Business Instruction

In both France and Norway, higher business education emerged from the paradigm of economic thinking referred to as *laissez faire*. This meant that the business schools initially were both promoted and diffused by men of the commercial classes, which in social terms encompassed also self-employed entrepreneurs. However, in terms of vocations and material wealth, this group was anything but homogenous. In both countries, it ranged from petty bourgeois families of shopkeepers, master artisans and tradesmen to larger merchants, bankers and industrial entrepreneurs.⁷¹ The three latter groups of men, who constituted the commercial bourgeoisie or *haute bourgeoisie* in both countries, were nevertheless the most active in promoting higher business education. By means of economic power and shared standards of conduct and culture, people belonging to these vocations often intermingled and blended in with the elite.⁷² Yet in the late-nineteenth century, as result of a shift from property and entrepreneurship to a new axis of stratification linked to occupation and education, parts of the commercial bourgeoisie were transformed into what has been called the *new* – and increasingly salaried – middle

⁷¹ Kocka, Jürgen (1995): 783 – 785.

⁷² Haupt, Heinz-Gerhard (1993), Kocka, Jürgen (1993). In German, this group was known as the *Wirtschaftsbürgertum*, as opposed to the *Bildungsbürgertum*. A similar conceptual distinction between the bourgeoisie of commerce and higher/general education, is not known in the French or English language. The French historian Youssef Cassis argues that this does not mean that German businessmen were different from their counterparts in England and France in terms of economic power, social status and political connection, but that they to a less extent mingled and merged with other “high-society” groups to form a dominating elite (Youssef Cassis (1993): 199).

class in most European countries.⁷³ Unlike the former, this heterogeneous group made a living not through property ownership, but through selling their labor on the open market. Education, diplomas and degrees thus became ever more important as demarcation lines in the social landscape, while “income began to rival real property as a measure of economic independence”.⁷⁴

The term “middle class” is, however, a contested and ambiguous concept. Firstly, the middle class(es) was not a class in the classical Marxist way, as it comprised both self-employed and salaried persons.⁷⁵ Their identity and self-understanding did, in other words, not depend on a collective location within the system of production. Neither was their connection to the market identical. According to Max Weber, a distinctive relation to land, labor and commodity markets were key characteristics of a class, but as long as the so-called “middle class” included others than just wage earners, their connection to the market differed.

The notion of class underlying the study of the middle class(es) has, therefore, to include the immaterial or the cultural. Pierre Bourdieu offers just such an understanding of class, as he primarily defines class as residing in mutual forms of consciousness or in shared cultures and practices among sets of people who collectively regard themselves as superior or inferior to others.⁷⁶ Social class is, in this respect, a relational concept, as it is determined through one’s connection to others, and is not something that is decided by one’s location in the production system and/or in one’s relationship to the market.

Secondly, the term “middle class” has been questioned because of its implicit references to the Anglo-Saxon world. Neither the French nor Norwegian languages and histories contains a linguistic equivalent to the English “middle class”. As the experiences and the political importance of this group differed from country to country, the concept itself also has had a tendency to vary among countries, as well as over time.⁷⁷ In France, for instance, “middle class” lost its significance or status to its plural form “middle classes” (*classes moyennes*) in the 1870s, “as result of the Third Republic’s

⁷³ Mills, Wright C. (1951): 64.

⁷⁴ Myhre, Jan Eivind (2003): 117.

⁷⁵ Tilly, Charles (2001): 3 – 14.

⁷⁶ Ibid.: 9.

⁷⁷ Kocka, Jürgen (1995): 783 – 784.

parliamentary democracy and unique balance of powers”.⁷⁸ This form of government facilitated, according to Christophe Charle, consensus between various social and political sub-groups (industrial, commercial and rural) and “tacitly contained several of the disparate elements of the ‘republican compromise’: individualism, faith in social mobility and fluidity and hostility towards the privileged”.⁷⁹ Additionally, the term asserts and reifies the aspiration – as much as the belief – in the equality of opportunity, made visible in a well-known system of upward mobility in recognized channels where individual merits had taken the place of property.

In Norway, in contrast, where the middle classes never held the same sway as in France, social dynamics of this kind were much less known. But let me first say that Norwegian historiography contains very few references to the “middle class”. Of course, this neglect does not necessarily imply that Norway had no middle class: Its importance and positions was, nevertheless, much weaker than in France, and the terms “middle class(es)” (*middelklasse(r)* – *mellomklasse(r)*) and “middle rank” (*middelstand*) were, in line with Jan Eivind Myhre, seldom potent concepts in the economic, political and social discourses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁸⁰ Middle-class identities have never been very popular with Norwegians, and for this reason the social segment itself has seemed rather “nameless” or “silent”. Still, they were never invisible in society: As in most other countries, a new middle class emerged as a new way of life in Norway at the turn of the last century, when salaried work and education were gradually becoming more important virtues and sources for social differentiation and inequality. But unlike the English term “middle class”, the wage-earning social segment of this group was part of the “middle rank”, and not the “middle class” in Norway, and so encompassed civil servants, merchants and businessmen and the liberal professions. There was still little difference between the way the “middle stand” and “middle class” were used in writings and daily conversations, Myhre writes. And unlike the English experience, where the term “class” emerged as result of industrialization, both “class”

⁷⁸ Charle, Christophe (2002): 66 – 67.

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 67.

⁸⁰ Myhre, Jan Eivind (2003): 103.

and “rank” or “estate” were used side-by-side in Norway between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, mixing pre-industrial terms with modern ones.⁸¹

Vertical social thinking related to various forms of social differences was less common in Norway than in most other European countries. Unlike French society, for instance, the Norwegian was never a feudal society of “ranks” and “orders”, and the “bourgeois revolution” had in Norway a very different social meaning. For the Norwegians, democracy was until 1814 equivalent with independence from Danish Rule, and later from the Swedish Crown (1905). The social implications of the move towards the modern democratic state were therefore radically different in Norway than in France, despite its rapid modernization and industrialization from the 1840s onwards. In Norway, there was no need to break up, or away from, a feudal society in the European sense, as in France. This had a major impact on the power as much as the experiences of the middle class(es). What the Norwegian middle class had in common with the French, however, was the quest for equality. Equality before the law and equality of opportunity, in relation to work and education, were key values within the emerging French and Norwegian middle-classes in the late-nineteenth century.

Even if the emergence of the new middle classes accelerated the institutionalization of higher business education in Europe, in the sense that the demand for such a type of training increased along the expansion of clerical work, a key stimulus for the emergence of French and Norwegian business schools stemmed from the diffusion of bourgeois culture, or what I would call the masculine norm or ethos of modern bourgeois culture, which preceded the rise of the new middle-classes.⁸² This cultural scheme, which evaluated men according to their work and professional standing as well as their capacity to provide for their “dependents”, became hegemonic in most parts of Europe from around the mid-nineteenth century. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, among others, have noted in their in-depth studies, the domesticated woman was a key result of the rise – and diffusion – of the male middle-class ethos.⁸³ Its essential logic was that men and women not only had different roles to fill, on the basis of their biological differences, but that they were also to be located in different spheres, most

⁸¹ Ibid.: 113.

⁸² Lecture held by Catherine Hall at the EUI, 10.04.2002.

⁸³ Ibid., Davidoff, Leonore & Catherine Hall (1987/2001), Smith, Bonnie G. (1981).

preferable along the public – private divide. The ideal of the separate spheres between the sexes, between the active and working man and the passive and domesticated woman, penetrated the bourgeois cultures of most Western European countries in the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ Originating in writers of the enlightenment, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a clear separation of gender roles was used to redefine the ways in which social contracts between people were to be made. Consequently, the rights of the citizens became mainly the rights of man, as women were excluded from public life, and thus left to the private sphere of home and family.

The diffusion and intensification of a male middle-class culture throughout the nineteenth century was still not the only reason why business communities started to launch academic instruction for businessmen. Evidently, it was also an expression of a social eagerness to raise their social status and professional legitimacy compared to other social groups. Commerce and trade were not highly thought of amongst the educated elite in the nineteenth century. As we shall come back to, the first business schools emerged in the outskirts of both state bureaucracies and universities. This made the business schools dependent on, or constricted by, two opposite forces: the legitimacy of the business class in society at large, on the one hand, and on the professional value given to formal education within the business communities, on the other hand. The difficulty of this positioning was that both had a strong tendency to alternate in accordance with economical conjunctures. In times of rapid economical growth, formal education was given far less importance in the world of commerce than during periods of recession. Within more conservative business circles, the college-made man was even looked upon with great doubt or mistrust.⁸⁵ Indeed, the apprenticeship system was for a long time the preferable arrangement for businessmen in search of capable business employees and directors, even though it did not deal with the business side of an operation, like the keeping of accounts.⁸⁶

The attempt to formalize the learning of commerce in independent business school never managed to eliminate the notion of moneymaking as “dirty” and “unworthy”, though. Within the elite, the businessman was had long been looked upon as

⁸⁴ Ibid., Kocka, Jürgen (1995).

⁸⁵ Daniel, Carter A. (1998): 16.

⁸⁶ Ibid.: 17.

being both uncultivated and simple-minded. Hence, families of the higher social classes hesitated to view higher business studies as a professional education. Instead they continued sending their sons to the faculties of law, medicine and engineering, from which they moved into positions of influence and power as civil servants, or industrialists. This made it difficult for the first business schools of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to attract applicants who fulfilled the official requirements of higher education.⁸⁷ That shop and office work was increasingly feminized reinforced this difficulty. Among unmarried bourgeois women, office work developed as a welcome alternative to teaching at the turn of last century, and among men of the lower classes it was even a “golden opportunity”. Nevertheless, many office workers were paid by the hour, especially women and the untrained. Well-trained and cultivated employees, in contrast, could count on both higher payments and positions. In this sense, qualification, education and exercise of authority provided strong competition to both the color line and gender. Masculinity was still to become an important institutional asset for the business schools established in the work environment of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, characterized by an accurate – but often implicit – sexual division of labor. Not least because an increasingly large number of middle-class women received the formal qualifications to enter institutions of higher learning.

Making Gender in Higher Business Education

Even though the business schools were “gendered” male as well as “classed” bourgeois when they were initiated in the latter part of the nineteenth century, not all managed to live up to these two ideals in the long run. Both the masculine and bourgeois identifications of the business schools were unstable constructions, partly because of their low reputation within the elite, but also because lower and middle-level commercial education recruited many young girls and (unmarried) women. All the same, a few

⁸⁷ The French *bac* was introduced in 1808 to sanction secondary education. Simultaneously it became the official requirement for entrance into higher studies and to pass the entrance exams (*concours*) for the *grandes écoles*. 32 candidates passed the exam in 1809, in 1861 it had increased to 5,522. In 1900 the annual number of candidates was still less than 10,000, indicating that it was reserved for only the very few – and (mostly) boys. The Norwegian *Ex-A* is the structural equivalent to the *bac*, although some would argue that it traditionally has been inferior to the level of the French diploma. It should be noted though, that the business schools that existed in Norway before 1936 did not require the *Ex-A*, and were for this reason considered as commercial colleges, or upper-secondary schools.

business schools like the French HEC the Norwegian NHH managed to maintain – and even strengthen – their masculine and elitist image, even if business education in general did not. How come that some institutions managed to stem the feminization and thus “la peur de la dévalorisation du diplôme si la plupart des filles dépassait un certain seuil”?⁸⁸ The US historian Sharon Hartman Strom argues in her extensive work on the origins of modern office work in the US that the men of the business elite were happy to recruit women as assistants at the turn of last century, as long as they – the men – remained in charge.⁸⁹ In line with the established gender order at the time, women could not take the lead officially, but as Strom says, “not because they lacked qualifications or proper educational training, but because they were women”.⁹⁰ Hence it was the discourse on gender that elaborated, systematized, and institutionalized a sexual division of labor within the firm, not qualifications. Put differently, a businessman’s fundamental qualification was initially not his schooling but his gender, and so “the very identity of the masculine business professions depended on the exclusion of women”.⁹¹

If we take this latter argument and apply it to the field of business education, this means that the exclusion of women was essential for the business schools too, in order to provide its business graduates with a professional identity. But unlike the field of engineering, the commercial class had no general theories about business administration and organization at their disposal when initiating the business schools in late-nineteenth century.⁹² As a substitute for this they took as a point of departure the ways in which business administration was socially practiced according to the bourgeois ideal of separate spheres – a key hallmark of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie.⁹³ With the entry of middle-class women into office work, this hallmark was to become even more important, as it stamped the realms of business administration which had an uncertain sexual division of labor. For institutions aiming at providing their graduates with a professional identity and status, this was rather unfortunate, symbolically speaking, and in particular when the profession which was being used as a model, i.e. civil engineering,

⁸⁸ Nioche, Jean-Pierre & Monique de Saint Martin (1997): 10.

⁸⁹ Strom, Sharon Hartman (1992).

⁹⁰ Ibid.: 95

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Daniel, Carter A. (1998).

⁹³ Kwolek-Folland, Angel (1994): 11.

but also the liberal professions, hardly engaged any women. The need to keep the sexes separate within the field of business education grew, furthermore, with women's increasing use of lower-secondary education in the early 1900s, and mass-entry into institutions of upper-secondary education in the 1930s, which had been for a long time the formal qualification for admission into higher business education. This blurred the cultural and spatial boundaries between the sexes also in terms of education and formal qualification, through which male hegemony or authority in society was increasingly based upon.

One way out of the dilemma caused by women's arrival in the office as well as in secondary education and vocational business education, was to make sure that the doctrine of the separate spheres remained an institutional practice within the upper field. In other words, masculinity was a key to both a symbolic and professional value similar to that of the engineers. This could be ensured either by excluding female applicants directly, and/or guiding women towards other kinds of upper-level business schools, gendered female instead of male. Another way could be to reproduce the gender hierarchy indirectly by adopting the institutional male standards set by other institutions of higher learning, by either introducing complicated systems of social selection, institutional elitism or by adapting to the knowledge regimes set by those in power.

But what forms of female exclusion were at use at HEC and NHH, and how have these ways contributed to the making of gender?

Given what has already been said about the managerial regimes of France and Norway in the preceding chapter, one should expect that HEC to a larger extent than NHH depended on an *explicit* exclusion of women in order to gain symbolic and professional value. Once again, this was because HEC operated in a system where managerial legitimacy, to a large extent, was based on social selection and thus *institutional belonging* (merits), whereas NHH took shape within a *knowledge-based* managerial regime. This rendered, generally speaking, gender or masculinity less important in Norway compared to France, because the exclusionary processes and practices took place on the level of knowledge production, not on the institutional surface. In such circumstances, social and professional recognition was achieved through the *implicit* exclusion of women, and not explicit as in France.

The forces at play in the social construction of gender are many, and are also paradoxically embedded. But given the two different logics of legitimacy portrayed above; i.e. institutional versus knowledge-based, and explicit versus implicit exclusion of women, one should expect that HEC would facilitate a notion of gender as “equality” or “sameness” when the school underwent a massive feminization in the 1970s. The main reason for this is that selection, in combination with strong institutional belonging, restrains or curtails the social importance of gender as “difference”, because once one is integrated institutionally, social and professional legitimacy is provided. In a system where legitimacy, in contrast, is knowledge-based and institutional elitism is, in general, viewed as being illegitimate, gender is expected to assert itself as “difference” during the feminization-process. Whether this was the case, historically speaking, is shown in the following chapters.

These hypotheses should not be understood as part of a theory to be tested, however, but as guiding principles for the historical-comparative analysis that follows. The four dimensions stated above have, furthermore, enabled me to identity three major periods of gender ruptures or “breakthroughs” in the field of higher business education in the two countries. With varying intensity or depth in the two countries, these three gender “regimes” run from approximately the 1870s to the 1920s, from the 1930s to the 1960s, and from end of the 1960s to the late 1970s. Consequently, the dissertation is organized in three main parts, and the countrywide comparisons are accomplished chronologically within distinct chapters. Whereas the French case is discussed and analyzed in Chapter 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9, the Norwegian is displayed in Chapter 4, 7 and 10. The importance of gender, or masculinity, in professionalization and elite-construction processes is returned to in the conclusion, i.e. Chapter 11.

Sources

There are not many sources available which address directly the relationship between gender and business education. Women – or men’s – lives and experiences, as gendered beings, have often been undocumented. I have therefore come to use almost everything I have come across, regardless of quality and comparability, and have also sought to

compensate for the lack of sources through interviewing.⁹⁴ But as much as “the potential of oral evidence is enormous”, to quote Paul Thompson from 1978, it also introduces some new concerns or dimensions to historical reconstruction.⁹⁵ Before addressing some of these problems, the two other categories of sources will be briefly presented.

In terms of primary sources, the thesis makes use of basically three kinds of material; i.e. written, printed and oral sources.⁹⁶ The written sources contain various sorts of documents, the most important of which are the following; school reports, correspondence within or between the business schools and the authorities, course syllabi and programs, and statistical material. Among the printed documents are; newspapers, students’ newsletters, membership bulletins and written memorials.⁹⁷ In addition to this the thesis also draws extensively on literature on business education and gender – and on the two manuscripts that try to combine the two dimensions. Marielle Delorme-Hoechstetter’s DEA-thesis has been of utmost help in chapter 5 and 6.⁹⁸ So has the doctoral thesis of the sociologist Frédérique Pigeyre (1986), which compares the socialization of female managers within some key institutions of higher commercial learning and engineering in France. Chapter 9 has an explicit point of departure in one of her conclusions regarding the feminization of HEC in the 1970s.

In Norway, in contrast, authors of fiction rather than scholars have come to address the intersection of gender, business education and office administration the most. The novel *The Song of the Red Ruby* (1956) by Agnar Mykle, offers rich descriptions of the gender “regime” at NHH in the early postwar years, through the life of the fictional business graduate Ask Burlefot, or Ash Burlefot as he is called in the English translation of the book used in chapter 7. As most Norwegians know, this book was withdrawn from bookstores and libraries shortly after its publications in 1956, because of its extensive use of authentic role models and, at times, pornographic descriptions. Mykle, who himself was a graduate of NHH, was later taken to court and fined.⁹⁹ Another Norwegian novel

⁹⁴ See “Interviews” in the Bibliography.

⁹⁵ Thompson, Paul (1978/1896): 87.

⁹⁶ See “Archives and Libraries” in the Bibliography.

⁹⁷ See “Periodicals and Newspapers” in the Bibliography.

⁹⁸ See “Literature” in the Bibliography.

⁹⁹ For more on the “Mykle case”, see Willy Dahl & Eiliv Eide (1975/1991): 97 – 98, and Anders Heger (1999): 283 – 311.

consulted is *The Office* (1942) written by Hans Geelmuyden.¹⁰⁰ In chapter 4, I have also sought advice from the books and life-story of the author Sigrid Undset, who attended a business program in Oslo in the late 1890s, thereafter working as the director's "right hand" for a decade.

Chapter 9 and 10, but to some extent also chapter 8, make use in addition of oral sources. These are primarily of two kinds: The first consists of structured interviews with key business-school people, conducted in the period 1999 – 2002, while the other derives from semi-structured open-ended interviews with nine French and ten Norwegian female business candidates, who graduated from HEC and NHH in the period 1970 – 1986.¹⁰¹ The structured interviews have mainly functioned as a critical corrective to the written sources. This means that they have, to a small extent, been used as independent sources. This should not be seen to undervalue them, though, as they have had a major impact on my interpretation of the historical material. In the beginning, they even functioned as a methodology or as an "excuse" to get in contact with people within the business schools. HEC and NHH form rather closed and autonomous communities that are difficult to penetrate. The French *grande école* system and culture was additionally very foreign to me as a Norwegian, but through the interviews – and a half-year long stay at HEC in fall 1999 – I managed to get a better grasp of both its milieu and institutional logic.¹⁰² The same counts for NHH. I am, nevertheless, far more familiar with this school, due to the fact that I studied in Bergen – where the school is located – for almost 7 years.

As with all types of material, the use of interviews raises fundamental concerns and demands when they are employed to reconstruct and interpret the past, such as the need to check internal consistency, the need for confirmation in other sources and an awareness of potential biases etc. Moreover, as already indicated, oral data constructed through open-ended interviews have some specific challenges compared to documentary

¹⁰⁰ The Norwegian title is *Kontoret*.

¹⁰¹ With "semi-structured open-ended interview" I mean a dialogue where the topic or interest of the interviewer is made clear but wherein leading questions are strictly avoided. The approach is quite similar to what often is called "life-story" approach – wherein the person interviewed is asked to tell what he/she recalls about specific issues/episodes in the past. The interview guide used during my interviews is available in English and Norwegian, and is in accordance with the methodological requirements taught at the Department of Ethnology and Folklore at the University of Bergen, 1990 – 1991. All interviews have been transcribed and can be consulted by anyone interested.

¹⁰² I also stayed at École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (ESSEC) in the spring of 2000.

or written data, in particular connected to what Thompson calls “the fallibility of memory”.¹⁰³ Bluntly speaking this means that the material itself depends upon the interviewee’s ability to remember and comprehend what actually took place, as much as upon his/her interest in the past. Recalling is, furthermore, an active process that in every individual case has its own characteristics, depending on when and where the interview has taken place as much as by/with whom. All these factors taken together have indeed consequences for the reliability of interviews as historical sources, and thus also the final analysis made by the historian.¹⁰⁴

By keeping these specific problems in mind, transcribed interviews are used primarily in two ways: Firstly, oral evidence on the basis of open-ended interviews is utilized to access information that is not available elsewhere. Secondly, it transforms one key “object” of study, i.e. gender, into “subjects”. This is particularly important in chapters 9 and 10, which address the feminization of HEC and NHH in the 1970s. In this way, the interviews become sorts of historical “testimonies” of subjective experiences of – and with – gender, institutionally and discursively shaped by two key actors of higher business education in France and Norway, and the countries’ respective political, business and middle-class milieus.

In order to respect the privacy of those who were interviewed, I have made all oral statements anonymous by replacing their official names with fictional ones. There is, nevertheless, an artistic reason for this invention. Historians are, perhaps more than any others involved in the social sciences, dependent upon narrative effects when analyzing past phenomena and practices. Imaginary names are one way of giving the narration life and credibility in parts of this dissertation. The use of rich descriptions is another, while the narrative structure is a third, with the construction of tension as an important artistic effect. Whether I have succeeded in achieving this, or not, is, of course, up to the reader to decide. To try to capture the development of higher business education in France and Norway, over a period of more than hundred years, is an ambitious undertaking. Thus, it only remains for me to say welcome on board and *bon voyage*!

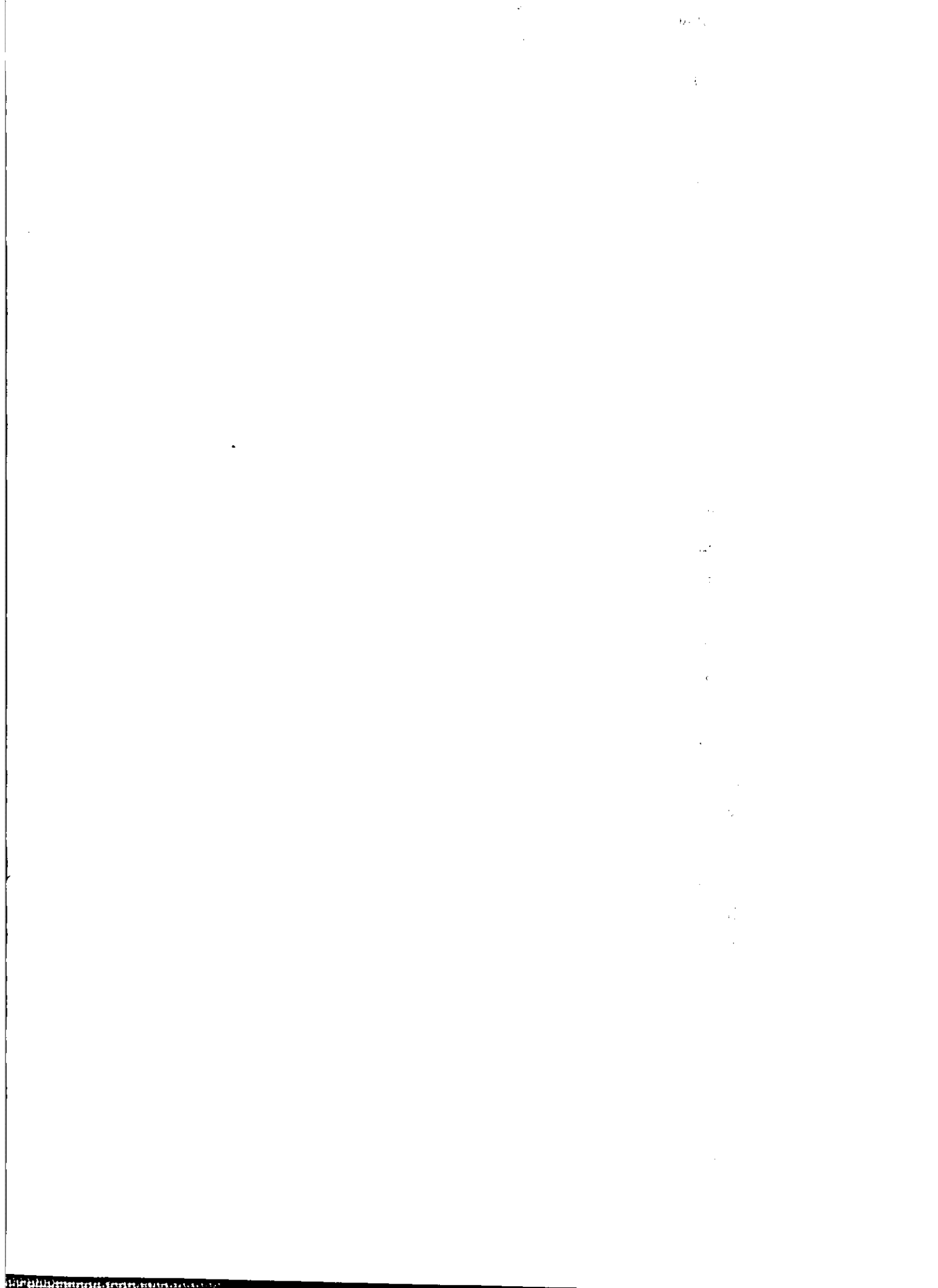
¹⁰³ Thompson, Paul (1978/1986): 91.

¹⁰⁴ Kjeldstadli, Knut (1992): 183 – 189.

Part One:

A Male Middle-Class Movement for Academic Business

Instruction; 1870s – 1920s



Whatever business education is, and however popular it has become, it was not always so.
C. A. Daniel¹

CHAPTER THREE

France: The Emergence of Business Schools for Males Students

At the turn of last century, many a French town or city got their own business school.² To be precise, 16 institutions were created between 1870 and 1914, and only the engineering schools and the teachers colleges' grew more than the so-called *écoles supérieures de commerce*. But, in contrast to the formation of future technicians, civil servants and teachers, the French State took no interest in the instruction of future businessmen.³ The commercial sector itself, formally organized in either industrial societies or regional Chambers of Commerce, thus sponsored the earliest business schools in the country. Despite this, the notion of business education, like that of business itself, never got the same acceptance in France as in the US. For a Frenchman like Jacques Siegfried, who traded cotton between the New World and France, the "commodification" of business studies was more than foreign. Over there, he said, "une école est une affaire qu'un

¹ Daniel, C. A (1998): 16.

² For an overview of places and institutions, see Appendix 7.

³ According to André Grelon (1993) this resulted in 42 new engineering schools between 1880 and 1913. With the reforms of the Republican Jules Ferry in 1881 and 1882, making primary education free of charge, secular and compulsory, the demand for teachers increased. This resulted in many new teacher training colleges (*écoles normales*), for primary school teachers, and some new "*écoles normales supérieures*" that recruited teachers for secondary education. The most prestigious of the latter was – and still is – the *École Normale Supérieure* (ENS) founded in Paris (rue Ulm) in 1794. In 1881, a female analogue was established, ENS de jeunes filles de Sèvres, and in 1882, another ENS for boys (St-Cloud). ENS Ulm and Sèvres remained separated until 1986. See Antoine Prost (1968), Jean-Michel Gaillard (2001)

spéculateur hardi entreprend pour faire fortune”, indicating that it was somehow different in his own home country.⁴

The emergence of higher business education was, in France, primarily driven by a search for professional recognition and identity by men of the commercial sector. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have shown in relation to British middle-class society, professionalism and expertise were both at work when a new – and alternative – kind of masculinity emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵ But there was more to a professional status than gender. Most of all, it relied on a common educational encounter based on an organized body of knowledge, along with a shared code of ethics.⁶ Thus, one might wonder, to what extent was “moneymaking” considered noble enough to provide such a foundation, and if it was not so considered, how the business-school entrepreneurs consequently tried to compensate for the social and moral ambiguity inherent in the practices of business.

⁴ Cited by Pierre-Alain Scieb (1991): 32.

⁵ Davidoff, Leonore & Cathrine Hall (1987/2001), Hall, Cathrine (2002): lecture at the EUI 10.4.2002, Kocka, Jürgen (1995): 792, Meuleau, Marc (1981): 9 – 11. The French Chambers of Commerce have their origins in institutions created during the sixteenth century, the trading bureaus. As a counterbalance to the merchant guilds, these institutions were set up to represent the interests of traders and manufacturers as well as providing information for public authorities so they could manage commercial affairs. In this way they encompassed or grew out from what Jürgen Habermas (1969/1992) has defined the bourgeois “public sphere”. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as Napoleon gained control of large part of Europe, this model spread to other continental countries. It is important to distinguish the continental European model of the CCI from commercial chambers in Ireland and United Kingdom, as these associations were not affected by the Napoleonic model, and thus remained in the private enterprise domain, subjected to private law. Paris for instance, got a Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) in 1803. Between 1806 and the late 1800s the French Chambers of Commerce experienced reduced autonomy – mainly due to state censorship. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the CCIs were however redefined as public institutions, and thus subjected to public national law, but they managed in fact to maintain some of their independence vis-à-vis the public authorities. For the case of the French Chambre de commerce et industrie (CCI) this law dates from 1898. In accordance with the law of 1898, “les CCI sont, auprès des pouvoirs publics, les organes des intérêts commerciaux et industriels de leurs circonscriptions. Elles sont des établissements publics, c’est-à-dire des services publics dotés de la personnalité morale et de l’autonomie financière. Par leur objet, autant que par leur régime, elles se distinguent des syndicats patronaux régis par la loi du 21 mars 1884” (Bruno Magliulo (1980): 4). The main duty of the French CCI is to promote and defend the general interest of commerce, industry and the service sector of their constituency, a duty that is secured through consultative, administrative and representative activities. Within the frame of the Chambers’ consultative responsibilities, professional education and training is of major importance (Chambers of commerce and industry in the European Community issued by the CCI of Strasbourg and Bas-Rhin, 1985).

⁶ Kocka, Jürgen (1995): 798, Daniel, Carter A. (1998): 72, Byrkjeflot, Haldor & Tor Halvorsen (1997): 57.

The Industrial Man of the North

The transfer from the primary into the secondary sector was slower in France than in countries like Great Britain and Belgium, although the country possessed, since the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, great industries in coal, iron and silk.⁷ None of these were, however, placed in the capital. And when mechanized industry emerged within sectors like the textile, metallurgy and chemical from the late eighteenth century onwards, the development was mostly centered in the north and northwest.⁸ Provinces like Nord Pas-de-Calais, Lorraine and Alsace were in particular prosperous. Apart from their very fertile soil, these provinces were also blessed with deposits of both coal and iron, which, thanks to new technology, fueled factories with power and resources, while Normandy gave industrialists access to the sea. From the middle of the 1800s, Le Havre developed into France's most important port, trading products of mass consumption like cotton and textile.⁹

Even so, geography and nature cannot explain why it was the northern regions that took the industrial lead in France. Historians of French economy and industry have often argued about the positive aspects of the bourgeois mentality of the north and northwest in terms of its steady commitment to commerce.¹⁰ By insisting on the virtues of hard "work and thrifts, independence and self-help", the bourgeois man of the North was the perfect entrepreneur – who could move from textiles into metallurgy, cotton imports, chemicals, metallurgy, and railroads.¹¹ At times this culture also opposed the power of the Parisian elite, which to a larger extent reproduced aristocratic ideals of privileges, leisure and refinement. The German historian Jürgen Kocka, among others, argues that the tendency towards mixing middle-class and aristocratic elements was rather common in a country like France, and especially in its capital.¹² This made the northern part of the country, so to speak, a cultural exception. Compared to both interior and southern regions, it appeared in fact to be more purely "bourgeois".

⁷ Fohlen, Claude (1970): 203, Milward, Alan & S. B. Saul (1979).

⁸ Ibid., Kemp, Tom (1971).

⁹ Milward, Alan & S. B. Saul (1979): 317.

¹⁰ Smith, Bonnie G. (1981): 19

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kocka, Jürgen (1995): 798.

In the opinion of the American historian Bonnie G. Smith, this historical fact had also a gendered explanation to it.¹³ Until “large-scale” industrial production took over in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the prosperity and success of the north depended heavily on women’s enterprise.¹⁴ As maintained by Smith, early family-oriented manufacturing relied on close cooperation between husband and wife. Whereas the wife kept the accounts and the books, the man was in charge of the sales. To find women in business management was thus rather common among the business families of the north, and many had daily contact with the workers, argues Smith, until the “prejudice against women acting in the marketplace appeared in the Napoleonic Code in 1804(8)”.¹⁵ Legal changes of this kind, together with the course of industrial development, pushed bourgeois women slowly out of the sphere of production and business management.

To argue that the split between production and reproduction, the public and private, respectively, was complete in relation to gender is, however, an over simplification.¹⁶ Historians of women and gender have, over the last decades, provided convincing arguments that the bourgeois notion of separate spheres between men and women was more of an ideal than a fixed reality. The rise of modern welfare policies, for example, emerged as a result of the intersection between women’s private life and work, and public policy.¹⁷ Bourgeois women’s withdrawal from production owing to legal changes and the victory of industrialism did not, therefore, signify a total removal from the public. Throughout the nineteenth century, French middle-class women continued to act in the so-called “male” public sphere, although the topics and issues were different.

¹³ Smith, Bonnie G. (1981): 34 – 49.

¹⁴ To characterize France’s industrial production as “large-scale” at the end of the nineteenth century does not imply that the size of the firms was big. About 85% of the country’s firms were both small scale and family owned, and continued to be so until well into the new century. Still, industrial production got a stronger foothold in the French economy during this period, and industry provided an increasing share of the country’s total production. The close connection between manufacturing and mercantile activity, so characteristic for the early industrial period, weakened too, although it in no case was broken. See Alan Milward & Sydney B. Saul (1979), Patric Friedenson (1997).

¹⁵ The drafters of the Napoleonic Code emphasized the family, not the individual citizen, as the basic unit of society. The husband/father was charged with the responsibility of preserving the family’s interest and integrity. Consequently, the rights and interests of all individual family members were subordinate to that of the family as a unit ruled by the husbands as a “chef de famille”. The Code is most known for its article 213, saying that “the wife owes obedience to her husband” (Stetson, Dorothy McBride (1987): 83).

¹⁶ Early contributors to the perspective of “separate-spheres” were American historians like Nancy Cott and Carol Smith Rosenberg, among others. Essential in this perspective is the development of a female culture and interest, linked to women’s experiences in the home and the private.

Instead of business organization, it was now philanthropy, female education, general welfare and feminism that occupied them, while their husbands took over the control of production and business development, aided by employed administrative personnel, trained either within the company or in so-called “schools of commerce”.

The bourgeois heartland of the northwestern France was, interestingly, enough also fundamental to the country's field of higher business education. On the whole, we can say that the movement for higher business education in France commenced in the Alsatian town of Mulhouse. Through its predominantly Protestant and egalitarian-minded population, this town developed into a kind of an entrepreneurial Mecca in the late eighteenth century. For its contemporaries, it was particularly well known for its advanced textile and cotton-cloth industry.¹⁸

The Early Experience of Mulhouse and its Diffusion

In the years before the great Revolution, Mulhouse had hosted a commercial academia, which prepared young boys for work in commercial offices.¹⁹ Until the revolt put a stop to the experiment in 1789, this institute was in fact one of the first vocational schools in France and the very earliest to specialize in trade and general business. When the idea was reintroduced in the 1860s, it was, however, to target older boys. École Supérieure de Commerce et de Tissage de Mulhouse, founded by the town's all-male industrial society in 1866, was a school for male youngsters between 15 and 17 years old. By so doing, the school in many ways followed the path already trodden by the École Spécial de Commerce et d'Industrie (ESCP) of Paris – the first French institution to provide commercial training at a higher level.²⁰ But, despite high ambitions and goals, the ESCP

¹⁷ Ladd-Taylor, Molly (1994), Larsen, Eirinn (1996).

¹⁸ Mulhouse was the first French township to introduce the principle of *égalité de instruction* between boys and girls; 1831. See Raymond Oberlé (1961): 55.

¹⁹ Oberlé, Raymond (1961). See Pierre Henri Haas (1993): 8, 18 – 19. André Grelon (1997) writes also about this early attempt to establish a commercial school in Mulhouse, by referring to Philippe Maffre, who has written a three-volume doctorate on the origins of commercial education in France; *Les origines de l'enseignement supérieur commercial français au XIX^e siècle* (Université Paris I, these, 1983, 3 tomes, 1262 pages).

²⁰ Notice sur l'Ecole Spéciale de Commerce établie à Paris, rue sainte Antoine, No. 143, ancien Hôtel de Sully, Paris, 1823, referred to in Bouilloud and Kochersperger (1996): 271, Notice sur l'enseignement Commercial organize par la Chambre de Commerce de Paris (1893): 65. In 1822 ESCP changed its name to Ecole spéciale de commerce for thereafter taking the name Ecole Supérieure de Commerce in 1830 when Adolphe Blanqui took direction. The Ministry of Commerce recognized the school in 1854, and in 1869 it

never managed to fulfill the intentions of its creators – the two Parisian silk merchants Broad and Legret.²¹ According to a report written by the Industrial society of Mulhouse, after visiting the school in the early 1860s, the Parisian business school was full of foreign students, especially South Americans, devoted to learning French.²² The men in charge of the business school in Mulhouse decided, therefore, to follow the example of the Commercial Institute of Antwerp instead.

The business school of Antwerp, established in 1852, is said to be the very first business school of the modern kind in Europe, and its aim was to create a Belgian elite of businessmen.²³ Its elitist orientation or approach was not though the main reason why the industrialists from Mulhouse fell for it. Far more important, if we are to believe scholars of French business education, was its attempt to combine commercial theory and practice.²⁴ By placing the teaching of the commercial “sciences” in a so-called commercial bureau, installed at the school, students received “business practice” training under very realistic conditions. They were, so to speak, learning business by doing, and not merely by reading and studying.

In France, where a rather encyclopedic pedagogical tradition dominated both the universities and the so-called *grandes écoles*, a practical approach of this kind was rare. Unlike elite school students, who were drilled in classical knowledge and abstract thinking in large lecture halls, the business school of Mulhouse provided its pupils with both realistic learning conditions and useful knowledge. According to the syllabus, as many as 12 hours per week were spent in the commercial bureau, along with about 4 hours teaching in English and German (or Italian/Spanish), 2 hours writing, 4 hours

was bought and taken over by the CCIP, which gave the school its present name: Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP). Between 1905 and 1928, the school was renamed Ecole Supérieure Pratique de Commerce et d'Industrie.

²¹ Redlich, Fritz (1957): 69.

²² Haas, Henrie-Pierre (1993). The same problem was noticed at the École Spécial de Commerce de Lyon, founded in 1822. Not until the ESCP was included in the educational portfolio of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP), in 1869, did it manage to escape the reputation as a “third-range” business school for foreigners.

²³ Engwall, Lars & Vera Zamagni (eds. 1998): 5.

Tableau comparatif du programme des écoles de commerce d'Anvers, de Mulhouse et de Paris, Pressé par M. E. Schulz, membre de la Chambre de Commerce de Lyon, see Pierre Henri Haas (1993): 214.

²⁴ The commercial “sciences” were made up of accounting, bookkeeping, and financial and commercial techniques.

commercial geography and between 1 – 3 hours economy, and commercial and industrial legislation.²⁵

But in 1870, Mulhouse's contribution to the field of business education was again disturbed by world events. This time it was the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and the ceding of Alsace and parts of Lorraine to Germany. Yet in contrast to the first closure, this did not represent the end of the experience as such. In the years to come, the business school of Mulhouse furnished the development of similar institutions within the new French borders.

By adopting a nationalistic discourse, Alsatian businessmen seeking asylum in France managed to raise large sums of money to continue the purpose of the Mulhousian business school. In the eyes of the French, Germany was acknowledged as being quite advanced in the field of commercial education.²⁶ To speed up the development which had already started in Alsace was thus perceived as a way of catching up with the "enemy". Besides, many of those being involved in the business school of Mulhouse fled for France, and assisted, in one way or another, the further realization of the idea in their new hometowns and cities. The business school of Lyon made, for instance, use of the director and several of the teachers from Mulhouse when it opened in 1872. Other teachers went to Rouen and Bordeaux, and helped to found similar schools there, while Le Havre profited from two of its most wholehearted supporters, the cotton merchants Jules and Jacques Siegfried.

Believing that vocational training was crucial for the competitiveness of the French economy, these brothers had once donated 100 000 Francs for the purpose of creating a commercial school in Mulhouse.²⁷ Once resettled in Le Havre with their families, they decided to continue with this project. The Écoles Supérieure de Commerce de Le Havre, launched in 1871 by its own Chamber of Commerce, was partly financed by the two newcomers from Alsace. By so doing, the Siegfrieds stood forward as the

²⁵ Haas, Pierre-Henri (1993): 214.

²⁶ By 1870, many German cities hosted both commercial and technical colleges. These institutions were by definition schools of lower level, and thus hierarchically placed under the type of business schools (*Handelshochschulen*) being launched in Cologne, Leipzig, Berlin and other central German cities as from the late 1870s onward. See Heinz-Dieter Meyer (1998).

embodiment of the new bourgeois man. But what about the business schools – were they an accomplishment of the very same idea? It is, of course, possible to interpret the early move towards academic business education in this manner. The diffusion of the “Mulhousian” model was without doubt a clear response to the economic and cultural development of specific regions of France in the nineteenth century, wherein the bourgeois notion of maleness and masculinity played a major role, alongside French nationalism. But neither the national question nor the cultural changes can alone explain why the diffusion of this model went as fast as it did. Just as important, I would argue, was the emergence of new political doctrines.

The liberals were at first the most notable supporters of academic business instruction in France. The Siegfried brothers were both wholehearted liberals.²⁸ But as the French encounter with free trade was rather short-lived, “non-interventionists” soon developed into full-fledged supporters of both the colonial party and the republicans. The colonial project of the Third Republic (1870 – 1940) proved, moreover, that the introduction of protection tariffs on manufactured goods, later also grain and cattle, did not necessarily mean a recession of French trade abroad. The loss of markets that the annulment of the Free Trade Treaty (1860) caused was easily provided for by taking on new colonies. And from 1902, trade with the colonies was more important than the trade with German, Luxembourg and Belgium put together.²⁹ Hence, an education that combined commercial techniques and legal principles with foreign languages was perfect for the new colonial man. At HEC, colonial affaires arrived early on its schedule of “optional specialization”, moreover those who were being colonized “profited” from the creation of higher business education during this early phase.³⁰ The business school of Algeria, which opened in 1901, was the first French business school launched outside the “old” France, and offered a two-year long education to the new citizens of the Republic. This tied, if not in a very tight manner, colonialism and higher business education closer

²⁷ AN: Coté CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 30: Ministère du Commerce et de l'industrie, Inspection générale de l'enseignement technique: Réorganisation de l'enseignement commercial supérieur, dated Paris the 30th of September 1913: 3.

²⁸ Scieb, Pierre-Alain (1991): 32.

²⁹ Sowerwine, Charles (2000): 88 – 89.

³⁰ Meuleau, Marc (1980): 30.

together, as the colonial project was more than essential to the development of French capitalism.³¹

Another political spur to the development of higher business education was the victory of French republicanism throughout the 1870s, which was characterized by an emphasis on equal rights and opportunities among people by means of free and compulsory education. This provided schooling with a function – or role – which was not just restricted to the stimulation of economic and industrial growth. In the eyes of the Republicans, education or schooling was a political and reformatory tool, well suited to cutting the bonds both to the *Ancien Régime* and the Catholic Church. This eager for reform, put on stage by the minister of education, Jules Ferry, in 1870, made elementary and secular schooling compulsory as well as free of charge. Inequalities in education, he said, “est, en effet, un des résultats les plus criants et les plus fâcheux, au point de vue social”.³²

Girls were in fact also included in the educational reforms of the early 1880s, today known as *les lois Camille Sée et Jules Ferry*, dated 1880 and 1881 – 1882, respectively.³³ Until this year, female education had, almost without exception, been a religious affair in France, taken care of by various orders and convents.³⁴ This exemplifies once again that the republican notion of equality in education in reality worked as a double-edged sword, which could provide a guarantee for the basic values of the French Republic, while at the same time enabling the new political elite to pursue its rivalry with an old “enemy” such as the Catholic Church. As a consequence, one’s birth and faith lost their statuses in higher education as a way of achieving or maintaining social privileges.

The Politics of Education during the Third Republic

The democratic motive of the republicans involved more than fighting the old elite. It also strengthened the role of higher education in selecting a new male elite on the basis of

³¹ For more on colonialism and capitalism, see Patrick Fridenson & André Straus (eds. 1987), and particular Chapter XIV, by Jacques Marseille: 259 – 271, and Charles Sowerwine (2000).

³² Jules Ferry, Discours sur l’égalité d’éducation (salle Moulière, 10 avril 1870).

³³ Lelièvre, Françoise & Claude Lelièvre (1991): 87.

³⁴ Mayeur, Françoise (1998): 229.

the emerging middle class, as access to secondary education was a bourgeois privilege, reserved to paying male citizens and a few scholarship holders. On the one hand, there was the *primaire – primaire supérieure* for the general people, which led to the secondary degree called *brevet*, while, on the other hand, there also existed a *secondaire – supérieure* track for boys that prepared them for the *baccalauréat (bac)*. In addition, gender-specific school tracks were the rule at all levels.³⁵ Also, after the idea of schooling as a public good to be equally distributed between the sexes was fully accepted, female secondary instruction continued to be separated and distinct from the instruction of males. According to the bourgeois ideology of the French Republic, overeducated women represented a kind of danger or threat to society. Ferry's main reason for supporting Camille Sée's bill for girls' education in 1880 was apparently that "it provided republican companions for republican men".³⁶

Female secondary schooling was thus, in the words of Françoise Mayeur, "neither as lengthy nor as broad as that for young men: Latin, philosophy, and advanced science were all for boys only".³⁷ Such a complementary notion of gender meant that female secondary education included subjects of interest to bourgeois women in particular, such as spoken languages, art and music, reading, writing and bookkeeping etc., while the bourgeois boys' schools taught what was deemed to be necessary to gain access to institutions of higher learning. This made it more than difficult for young women to earn the *baccalauréat (bac)*.³⁸ Even though exemptions had been given since 1868, and formal rights were granted in 1880, girls were in need of private tutoring in the classics in order to pass the *bac*. This reinforced the notion of higher education, and especially elite-school attendance, as a symbol of male virtue, working either alongside or in combination with ownership.

The importance of higher education thus increased radically towards the turn of the century. If we are to believe scholars of education, it was so important that it almost monopolized the accreditation of cultural capital – to borrow a concept from Pierre

³⁵ Only in rural and poor areas did girls and boys happen to sit side by side.

³⁶ Sowerwine, Charles (2001): 37.

³⁷ Ibid.: 236.

³⁸ Offen Offen, Karen (1983).

Bourdieu's terminology.³⁹ In other words, the embodied form of cultural competence of conduct, derived from material wealth but worked on individually, was transformed into academic institutions. Firstly, this neutralized as much as depersonalized cultural capital from some of its sources. Secondly, it extended the "life" of cultural capital beyond and independent from the person of its bearer, since it was institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications, which thirdly; enabled holders and providers of cultural capital to compare the value of the capital possessed by different agents, and even convert it back into economic capital via its value on the labor market. But as the *facultés* still struggled to recover from the loss of autonomy and academic freedom that the foundation of the Napoleon *Université impériale* had caused them in 1809, these ideological and structural changes promoted in particular the *grandes écoles*, which were established for the screening of male civil servants and statesmen.⁴⁰

Male students of *grandes écoles* like the prestigious École Polytechnique (X) and École Normale Supérieure (ENS) were, paradoxically, the ultimate "winners" of the democratic reforms in the first phase of the Third Republic, not university students as in most other countries. This socio-political scenario motivated social groups outside the elite to seek – or even create – institutions similar to the *grandes écoles* in order not to fall behind socially and culturally. Especially amongst the increasingly wealthy, but thoroughly unglamorous merchant classes, it seemed urgent. In contrast to the liberal professions, men of the commercial estate were most often uneducated in the formal sense of the word. Besides, many of them had not earned their fortunes through family bonds and property, such as the *haut bourgeoisie*, but through hard and risk-seeking work, either at home or in some of the French colonies. Initiating higher business institutions was thus a way of transforming their economic capital into other and more legitimate symbols of power and manhood, while at the same time providing businessmen with a professional identity. The *écoles supérieures de commerce* failed, however, to do so. In fact, the schools were never to be considered a true academic institution.

³⁹ Ringer, Fritz (1992): 28 – 30.

⁴⁰ Prost, Antoine (1968): 224, 505.

Compared to the late nineteenth-century system of higher education, the very first French business schools did not provide an education *supérieure*. The adjectives “middle” or secondary seem more adequate. Unlike the universities, where the *bac* was the entry ticket, the business schools had few formal admission requirements besides age and sex. No competitive entrance exams (*concours*), which characterized the state governed *grandes écoles*, were held, and there was little competition between the hopefuls. Normally, the business schools had room for all applicants, whereas the *grandes écoles* took only a few of the very best and. Preparing for an elite school education could in fact take as much as 5 – 6 or 7 years in specific preparatory classes, organized by a few central *lycées*.⁴¹ An elite-school education and a business education differed, therefore, considerably in length, as young men wanting to study business undertook no preparation beforehand. This made the business schools inferior to the established system of higher education in general, and the elite-schools in particular.

The interest in academic business instruction was also very low among the bourgeoisie. Even within the commercial class itself, the idea of studying business was not well regarded. Larger tradesmen, merchants and industrialists, who had climbed to positions of great economic power, would often hesitate to send their sons to a provincial business school. In-house learning or apprenticeship had been, for a long time, the most preferred arrangement, with the result that many of the new schools fought flagging demand from the start. The business school of Rouen, opened in 1871, had to close down after only a decade, because of few applicants and economic difficulties.⁴² Contemporaries, however, interpreted this flagging demand mostly as a sign that commercial practices could – or should – not be theorized. As said, many businessmen preferred to educate their business employees “within the house”, and for those who had to take the lead – as directors – there was little help in theoretical knowledge. Others asserted that the problem was a question of having a diffused or unclear professional ambitions, and argued that future businessmen and employees had to be educated separately and not within the same school.

⁴¹ The most known and prestigious were of course located in Paris, such as Louis le Grand and Carnot.

⁴² According to Pierre-Henri Haas (1993: 23), the ESC of Rouen merged with École Supérieure des Sciences et des Lettres de Rouen in 1883, but had to close down in 1886 due to failing markets of applicants.

Among the business school entrepreneurs, in contrast, social intermingling was seen as an advantage. The industrial milieu of Mulhouse, and also the one of Lyon, showed in fact a very egalitarian mind, and Philippe Testenoire, the incoming president of the Chamber of commerce in Lyon, defended warmly this profile. “[I]l ne voit aucun mal à ce que les fils de familles riches soient assis sur les même banc à côté des enfants issus de parents moins fortunes”, he stated during a meeting with the administrative board of the town’s commercial chamber in 1870.⁴³ From his point of view, there was no reason to have separate institutions for different social groups. The business schools should, according to him, aim at educating both future directors and office clerks. Taking the time in which this was suggested into consideration, this egalitarian or utilitarian attitude was extraordinary. As in most other European countries, education was a key instrument of social distinction; separating the elite from the people, and men from women.

But, as much as the attempt to go against this logic of social differentiation was quite idealistic or modern, it had also a very damaging effect on the social reputation of the business schools. The French *écoles supérieures de commerce* never managed to establish a firm foundation within the elite. On the other hand, the business schools of cities like Lyon, Bordeaux, Le Havre etc. were considerably more advanced than the elementary schools and evening courses of commerce, which had evolved from the mid 1800 onwards.⁴⁴ The École Commerciale in Avenue Trudaine, opened by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) in 1863, recruited for example male adolescents at a much lower age than the regional, French business schools.⁴⁵ Additionally, it included from early on young girls in “separate spheres”.

⁴³ Archives consulaires – procès-verbal de la commission du 29 mars 1870, Chambre de Commerce de Lyon, referred to in Audrey Soria (1998): 65, 67.

⁴⁴ Lyon was among the very first French cities to create commercial evening courses for women, both married and unmarried. The course established in 1856 was jointly run by the town’s Chamber of commerce and the municipality (Pierre-Henri Haas, 1993:26). The city of Paris launched a similar program in 1870, while the CCIP followed up four years later with a “cours gratuits de comptabilité pour les femmes et les jeunes filles” (BNF: 8V1184).

⁴⁵ i.e. between 12 and 15 years old, not between 15 and 18. Besides the objective of these schools was of another kind, as they solely aimed at recruiting office clerks and business employees, not businessmen and directors. Thus, the curriculum and the level of the teaching were lower too, compared to that of the business schools. The three-year long program the École Trudaine emphasized, for example, reading and writing, geography and history, foreign languages, and some basic commercial law, in combination with arithmetic, accounting, bookkeeping, correspondence, calligraphy and stenography. The pupils were mostly drawn from the 9th arrondissement, where the school was located and neighboring ones, such as the 5th, the

Elementary Business Education for Both Sexes

By 1909, France had in total 48 elementary commercial schools similar to that of the Avenue Trudaine, whereof 13 of them were designated for girls instead of boys.⁴⁶ This indicates that women too profited from the expansion of business education in France, while this was not the case in relation to the business schools, as they were open to men only. Unlike *écoles supérieures de commerce*, institutions of elementary business education recruited their pupils from low class families, families that could not afford living up to the bourgeois ideal of the domesticated woman, at least not until the daughters got married. However, the development of commercial schools for women in particular not only proves the institutions' median social standing, in the sense that they mainly recruited their students from the lower middle classes. Their existence indicates also that there was a growing demand for young workingwomen in public and private administration from the late nineteenth century onward. From the view of Delphine Gardey, this demand for female labor in administrative bodies was visible already during the 1870s, first in the public sector, such as in the Post and Telegraph etc., and then in private business.⁴⁷

There were, nonetheless, major social and educational differences between those working in the private administration and those working in the public sphere. Female business employees were, in the words of Gardey, most often better skilled than those working in public administration. "Les employées du Crédit Lyonnais ont un bon niveau

17th and the 18th. These locations indicate moreover that lower commercial education was a lower-middle class institution, while the business schools were more strictly bourgeois – at least in their profile. The commercial school in Trudaine was a typical "petty bourgeoisie" school, recruiting for "petty bourgeois" occupations. Consistent with CCIP's own statistics from 1893, less than 5% of the graduates continued into work outside the commercial and administrative sphere (Notice sur l'enseignement Commercial organisé par la Chambre de Commerce de Paris (1893): 15 – 16).

⁴⁶ Bruno, Magliulo (1982), BNF: République Française; Ministère du Commerce de l'industrie (1911): Programmes-types des cours des écoles pratiques de commerce et d'Industrie par les jeunes filles: Programmes provisoires (Paris; Imprimerie Nationale). In this course, the following subjects and skills were taught: Comptabilité et commerce, Exercices pratiques, Législation commerciale, Economie commerciale, Géographie, Française (correspondance commerciale), Langues étrangères, Sciences appliquées à l'étude des marchandises, à l'hygiène et à l'économie domestique, Calligraphie – sténographie, dactylographie, Morale, Histoire, Dessin, Enseignement ménager, Etudes et récréation. For more on this issue, see Chapter 5.

⁴⁷ Gardey, Delphine (2001): 55. It was not common to hire women to administrative business positions in France until the early 1900.

d'instruction et sont le plus souvent issues des classes moyennes".⁴⁸ Concerning formal diplomas, this meant that they often held the *brevet élémentaire* (secondary education – the people's track), combined with a certificate from one of the many commercial courses which mushroomed from the 1870s onwards.⁴⁹

The Parisian Chamber of commerce (CCIP) opened one of the first courses of this kind in 1874, designated for young girls between the age of 12 and 16, at the commercial school in Avenue Trudaine. But unlike the boys, who had access during the day, the girls were only welcomed at night, from 7.30 to 9.30 pm, Tuesday to Saturday. The duration was three years, and the curriculum was almost the same as for the boys. The only subjects lacking from the female syllabus were geography and history; what Jacques Sigfried once had termed as "la philosophie de l'enseignement commerciale".⁵⁰ Evidently, girls had – according to the CCIP – no use of the extra perspective on, or dimension of commerce that the lessons in geography and history might provide. Much more important, it was argued, was the purely practical aspects of business administration, like accounting, bookkeeping, economy, correspondence, calligraphy etc. These gender differences exhibit that there was also a distinction between general culture and practical knowledge in lower as in higher business education.

Another institutional characteristic, which separated the female syllabus from the male, was the existence of a compulsory sewing class for girls. During their three years the girls were taught to make clothes for both adults and children, and by the end of the program they were asked to make some of their own working wardrobe, made up of long skirts and blouses. Furthermore – and again in contrast to the male lessons organized during the day – the female evening classes were free of charge. From my point of view, the sponsoring issue points towards the understanding that families from what we could call the petty bourgeois, or the (lower) middle-class, had no tradition of investing money in their daughters' education. So the fact that the CCIP should actually take on the costs

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 61.

⁴⁹ Notice sur l'enseignement Commercial organisé par la Chambre de Commerce de Paris (1893): 34. Haas, Pierre-Henri (1993): 22. In 1889, Paris had 11 different institutions which offered evening courses for young girls and boys, and adult women and men. Altogether 11.332 pupils were enrolled in such programs nationwide in 1889, whereof 5364 were placed in programs reserved for men, 2208 in women's classes, and 3760 in mixed classes.

⁵⁰ Scieb, Pierre-Alain (1991): 38.

of running evening courses for women themselves, probably meant that there was a real need for both more and skilled *female* employees. Women were both less expensive and less demanding.⁵¹

The argument of utility was still not the only one at work when the CCIP spoke about its new invention. As important was the issue of morals, or the enabling of young girls to make a living in an “honorable way”. The CCIP explained:

Nous avons voulu donner aux femmes qui ont à pourvoir à leur existence, et dont le nombre augment chaque jour, un nouveau moyen de vivre honorablement; les rendre aptes à ce travail doux et qui ne requiert aucune dépense des forces physiques, mais qui exige de l'*attention*, du *soin*, de la *vigilance*, de l'*exactitude*, toutes qualités parfaitement en harmonie avec le caractère de la femme; de plus, fournir les maisons de commerce de Paris d'employées *capables*, *intelligentes*, *honnêtes*.⁵²

As illustrated above, women's physical characteristics and moral character were mentioned explicitly when the CCIP talked about its female evening course. In fact, women's high morals and also their precision or exactness were at the core of the program, which aimed at furnishing “les maisons de commerce de Paris”, with capable employees. This does not mean, however, that the CCIP had the intention of building or constructing a new and independent female character. On the contrary, it made clear references to the bourgeois family ideal in the sense that women with commercial knowledge were very handy for their husbands. They could, in the words of the Chamber, easily assist their husbands, or if they were widowed, “chargée, dans l'intérêt de ses enfants, de continuer la gestion d'une maison de commerce...”.⁵³ Including women in elementary business education was thus supporting rather than confronting the bourgeois notion that the house was every woman's place, and mothering every woman's social duty. “Il importait aussi d'apprendre aux femmes les règles d'une saine économie est de

⁵¹ According to a CCIP announcement from 1893, the girls were “particulièrement employées dans les établissements de crédit qui depuis 1879 on créé des emploi qui leur sont spéciaux: La Banque de France, Le Crédit Foncier, Le Crédit Lyonnais, Le Crédit Industriel et Commercial, La Société Générale”. The wage varied from about 1000 to 2400 franc per year, and the working day was 8 hours.

⁵² Ibid.: 33. The underlining is done by the CCIP.

⁵³ Ibid.

faire d'elles de bonnes ménagères, soucieuses des deniers de la maison".⁵⁴ Female commercial education hence emerged from within the logic of the separate spheres, reinforcing the notion of women's "difference" from men, just as the male programs wanted to verify the bourgeois norm of masculinity. Consequently, the young girls were also learning different things, and taught in separate rooms.

The recruitment problems faced by the business schools in the 1870s and 1880s had, therefore, nothing to do with the feminization of the lower levels. As we have seen, women's entry into lower commercial education neither confronted nor challenged the male establishments. The problems concerning recruitment seem, instead, to have derived from a notion within the French educational system that the cultural distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge was equivalent with the lower and higher educational divide, respectively. This made it highly difficult for the regional business schools to carve out a place for more entrepreneurial studies within the upper field, dominated as this system was by the *grandes écoles*, which celebrated abstract thinking before applied science.⁵⁵ As in most European countries at this time, the distinction between practical and theoretical, lower and higher education were explicit demarcations of class and gender. Any attempts to change or challenge this system and its logic, by introducing new dimensions or specialties, met with resistance from either the academic elite or the main consumers of higher education at the time; i.e. the social elite and the expanding bourgeois classes. Thus, the French education system, combining classical knowledge and abstract thinking with a hard selection process, was almost incompatible with the kind of "vocationalism" promoted by the first business schools.

Scientific research was, moreover, conducted in independent institutions in France. Only a few of the state owned elite schools like École Normale Supérieure (ENS), École Polytechnique (X) and École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), did research besides teaching.⁵⁶ This made the French institutions of higher education primarily into organizations of instruction and selection, lacking the research foundation and the disciplinary orientation that characterized the German, and to some extent also

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ringer, Fritz (1992).

⁵⁶ Neave, Guy (1993): 161.

the American system of professional learning.⁵⁷ The business schools could, for this reason, not integrate easily into the established corpus of higher education in France, by, for example, developing the commercial “sciences” further. As an alternative, they had to rely on their own institutional development. The field’s strongest principle of coordination was thus not the business disciplines, but the individual institution, combined with its implicit maleness, at least until the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* (HEC) opened in 1881.⁵⁸ Located at the corner of boulevard Malesherbes and rue de Tocqueville, this new creation within the field of higher business education confirmed, to a large extent, the “new”, bourgeois and wealthy Paris that had developed during the Second Empire.⁵⁹

HEC – A Parisian Business School ‘Pour les Fils de la Bourgeoisie’

With the dynamism of Baron Georges Haussmann – and the money of the French taxpayers – the city of Paris had been transformed into a modern metropolis by the beginning of the 1880s. The dirty, overpopulated and impenetrable streets were replaced with the grand *boulevards* and the long avenues. The social intermixing, which characterized it earlier had also disappeared. The bourgeoisie got spacious apartments in some districts, while servants, artisans and general low-class people were placed in others. Haussmann’s design complemented this “the growing division of labor in the industrial economy” as the sociologist Richard Sennett has suggested, and made the new and emerging class society visible for visitors as well as locals.⁶⁰ Industrial production was, however, not the main activity of the Parisian bourgeoisie. Like most capitals, the

⁵⁷ Clark, Burton (1984): 266. Hence, to explain the ways in which education systems have come to differ cross-nationally, the sociologist Burton Clark makes an ideal type distinction between the principle of ‘science in’ and ‘science out’. In systems where teaching and research is combined, the disciplines are the basic unit of organization, but in countries which distinguished between research and teaching, such as France, the educational institution itself becomes most often the strongest coordinating principle. According to the work of Marte Mangset (2003) on the formation of top-bureaucrats in France and Norway, France can be said to represent the ‘science out’ tradition, whereas the Norwegian system is closer to the ‘science in’.

⁵⁸ The state did little to encourage – or coordinate – either the lower levels or the higher. Pierre-Henri Haas, a historian of French business education, has argued that it was this absence of a national regulation “from above” that made evening courses and short time programs flourish in French cities towards the end of the nineteenth century. They developed, in the words of Haas, “pour compenser l’absence d’un réel enseignement commercial à l’échelon national” (Pierre Henri-Haas (1993): 23).

⁵⁹ Sowerwine, Charles (2001): 3.

⁶⁰ Sennett, Richard (1974): 135.

“production” of Paris was much connected to trade and commerce, finance and bureaucracy. Factories were, especially in the earliest phase of industrial production, land hungry operations, and open land was not readily available in the city of Paris. The Parisian manufacturers specialized, therefore, most often in the fabrication of various retail items for a growing population.

Just from the start to the end of the nineteenth century, the number of inhabitants in Paris grew from half a million to about two million five hundred thousand.⁶¹ Only London had a population growth as vigorous as Paris, which in the minds of experienced entrepreneurs and negotiators meant a steady growth of potential consumers.⁶² As a response to both the population growth and innovative systems of mass production, new sales methods were introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century. At this point, France was far from lagging behind its European competitor Britain. The department store, combining fixed-prices with large volume of goods, but with a small markup on each item, was in many ways a French invention. The Parisian *Bon Marché* had been the very first in this class, opening in 1852. With the help of employees, of which many were women, the department store could easily increase both sale and profit.⁶³

The making of HEC, a business school for the boys of the bourgeois, was an evident response to the capitalist logic encapsulated in the department stores. In the words of the CCIP, there was need for a school to serve the new form of public commerce that trade, retail production and sale represented. In this way, the school aimed at creating a breeding ground for young boys, who after completing higher studies in the needed sciences, were ready to progress into business, either in France or abroad, in order to “soutenir, sur les marches étrangers, la concurrence de tous les produits similaires”.⁶⁴ The official opening of the school took place in December 1881, in an large amphitheater, which in the eyes of the newspaper *Le Figaro*, was the “plus vaste qui soit à Paris (...) mille personnes se présentent sur les gradins.”⁶⁵ What the students ought to

⁶¹ Ibid.: 131

⁶² The reason for this was the that London had more people beforehand, and partly because its borders were less definite compared to those of the French capital.

⁶³ Miller, Michael B. (1981): 190 – 191.

⁶⁴ Mémoire de Gustave Roy sur le programme de l'Ecole, 18 septembre 1876, referred to in Meuleau (1981): 12.

⁶⁵ *Le Figaro* the 5th of December 1881, Meuleau (1981): Annexe 6: 191.

learn, however, the journalist did not say. A closer look at HEC's study program shows that there was little that was special or scientific about the teaching. To be exact, the students had 11 hours of general accounting and 10 hours modern languages per week in both years, combined with 3 hours of economic geography, law and merchants' studies, and 1 ½ hour of economic history and political economy.⁶⁶

Given what we already know about the study programs of the schools which the CCIP found "inferior", the curriculum of HEC was far from path breaking. Actually, its combination of subjects was, to a large extent, identical with the schedule of the ESCP – the school that the Mulhousian industrialists had characterized as being "too general and full of foreign students, devoted to learn French".⁶⁷ Not until the ESCP was included in the educational portfolio of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, in 1869, did it manage to escape the reputation of being a business school for foreigners. It became, nonetheless, never a true competitor to the HEC, due to its much lower entry requirements. For the time being, HEC was the only French business school to require the *bac*. The status hierarchy was, consequently, linked to the rules of admission. Additionally, it gave priority to a different mode of pedagogy, as classroom teaching was replaced by lecturing in a large amphitheater. Only 4 hours per week took place outside the school's large auditorium, occasioned by so-called "company visits" in the Parisian hinterland. The remaining time, students were placed in the lecturing hall, making notes while listening to the reader, being taught "businessman-ship" in combination with the subjects of *culture générale*. This was in line with what has already been said about the Parisian elite's aversion for practical knowledge. In other words, it was the lower levels, the elementary business programs that should drill the commercial techniques, not HEC. But what does it mean to teach business in accordance to the French standards of "general culture"?

In the English edition of Pierre Bourdieu's book, *The State Nobility*, the French term *culture générale* is defined as "wide-ranging knowledge and sophistication".⁶⁸ However, for a non-French person, such as myself, it is difficult to grasp the practical

⁶⁶ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 16.

⁶⁷ In addition, a few hours in industrial subjects like technology and mechanics, and chemistry and physics, appeared in the ESCP's program – but not at HEC.

⁶⁸ Bourdieu, Pierre (1996): 391.

implications of this explanation. What is considered “wide-ranging knowledge” and “sophistication” is not only highly culturally and historically dependent, but also varies from country to country and across time. But as students of French education have already noticed, Fritz Ringer can help in solving this problem. He explains *culture générale* by comparing – or even contrasting – it to the German ideal of *allgemeine Bildung*.⁶⁹ The German *Bildung*, says Ringer, rested on another notion of culture than the French ideal of *culture générale* by being connected with “earnest moral reflection and serious arts, of self-cultivation and inner growth, of education and scholarship”.⁷⁰ In nineteenth-century France, such a commitment to individual uniqueness was considered bold and even selfish. It threatened what was considered to be the common good of society and nation by loosing the social bonds in which a common belief is build upon.⁷¹ Cultivation was rather associated with the development of one’s intellectual faculties through vigorous mind gymnastics on the basis of a pre-given body of general knowledge.

According to the French tradition, the classics symbolized and communicated these general ideas the best. But mathematics and to some extent modern languages also gained a footing when training the mind. In this way, Ringer argues, *culture générale* “differed sharply from German *Bildung* in its culture animus against individual uniqueness and diversity” – a diversity that was to further stimulate educational specialization, *Wissenschaft* and positive knowledge, not “generalization” and esthetic formalism, as in France. The Germans were, subsequently, far more open to diversity in education than the French, who were, so to speak, “stuck” in the model of general knowledge. This cultural embodiment of cultivation and masculine honor not only had an impact on the demand for more specialized knowledge in France, but it also made business schools aware of the importance of trying to combine the two – practical knowledge and general culture. HEC took this particularly seriously, since it was a prerequisite of success in the capital. For instance, the *bac* requirement symbolized that its students’ were familiar with the classics, ancient philosophy and the “dead”

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 146.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 78.

⁷¹ Boutroux in Ringer (1992): 147

languages; i.e. what the French defined as their cultural heritage.⁷² The teaching included, moreover, a form of writing and speaking that characterized the hypercivilized Parisians of the time, a distinction that in fact went beyond curricular categories like “French” and “English”, “geography” or “history”.⁷³ The social distinction between the business schools was, hence, a question of quality and culture, not science or specialization. In Paris, showing cultural refinement was increasingly related to intellectual capacity and educational capital, in addition to manners and social appearance. This was, nevertheless, not enough to attract the best students.

Feeble Response in Paris

Even though HEC got its diploma approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture shortly after opening, the interest in it turned out to be low. 62 boys signed up the first year, but the following year, the number was only 50, of whom many had not passed the *baccalauréat* degree (*bac*). Its first students did, therefore, not belong to the social strata the CCIP had targeted. Nor did the students live up to the level of culture celebrated by the elite. Instead of belonging to the grand bourgeoisie, they were more likely to have been the sons of so-called small *commerçants*. For the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP), this was of course a major disappointment. Given the enormous investments in buildings and personnel, the chamber had hoped for 250 students after a few years. But, looking back, it's evident that this plan or calculation was overly optimistic. Leaving aside the fact that it was a new educational institution, HEC had to compete hard for a rather small amount of graduates. Despite several attempts to increase the national capacity in upper-secondary education, of which the introduction of the *enseignement spécial* in 1865 was the most important, only 5000 – 6000 *bac* were

⁷² The *Lycée Classique* emphasized, as the name indicates, the classical disciplines of Latin, Greek and Ancient history, Philosophy and French languages. The modern lycée, introduced for the first time in the 1850s, gave, on the other hand, priority to the new and modern sciences, which in practice led to the replacement of, for example, Latin with mathematics. The dominant position of the classical disciplines was not challenged seriously until the 1920s. This reinforced the importance of classical training and a so-called “bonne culture générale” in entering the French elite, and the *grandes écoles* including those of engineering.

⁷³ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 16, Haas, Pierre-Henri (1993).

delivered each year.⁷⁴ That HEC managed to get in some of them was thus almost a wonder, in particular as the CCIP also decided to exclude graduates from the newly established secondary schools (*lycées modernes*), which specialized in the modern sciences and mathematics. The reason for this was the fact that the classical track still counted as the most prestigious one – giving access to all studies on a higher level, while a *bac enseignement spéciale*, what later came to be called *enseignement moderne*, only qualified one for certain kinds of careers. A *bonne culture générale* was, in other words, seen as superior to specialized knowledge.

France was not the only country where efforts to make education more responsive to the needs of modern society were criticized and opposed. In most countries, the educated elite felt threatened by the development of a more utilitarian approach to education, and in many places it led to open confrontations between classicists and reformists, or realists as contemporaries called them. It took, nonetheless, considerably longer time for the realists to “win” in France than in northern-European countries like Norway. Many of the *grandes écoles* refused, for example, to take on students with a modern *bac*. Consequently, the professors and the teachers in the secondary schools encouraged their students to continue within the traditional program, celebrating the classic disciplines of Latin and Greek. Moreover, some institutions of higher education gave students with classical diplomas special points during the entrance examination. This made a classical *bac* the most common educational background even among those entering the prestigious engineering schools like École Polytechnique (X) and École de Mines. Only École Centrale, which educated engineers for private business, agreed to accept graduates from the modern gymnasium, but as it was only one of very few to do so, the “realist” or modern type of upper-secondary education did not really establish itself until much later.⁷⁵ Even the institution created to educate its future teachers, the École Normale Supérieure de Cluny, had to close down shortly after opening. The reason

⁷⁴ Prost, Antoine (1968): 33. The first modification of the classical disciplines’ monopoly in French higher education came in 1852, when the upper grades of secondary education were divided into a scientific and a literary (essential classical) field. Thirteen years later, in 1865, a more modern course of study was introduced alongside the classical – scientific divide. *Enseignement spécial* was its name, stressing the modern and spoken languages instead of Latin and Greek, and applied mathematics and science instead of intellectual abstraction and political economy.

⁷⁵ Locke, Robert (1984): 54, Day, C.R (1972 – 73).

for this was because of the harsh protests from *les normaliens* in rue Ulm, the aristocrats of the French educational elite.⁷⁶ The only “modernization” being undertaken was hence the replacement of Latin with the French classics. This evidently maintained the traditional orientation of secondary education towards the liberal arts, and not the modern and applied sciences, as was the case not only in Germany, but also Norway, as we shall see in the coming chapter.⁷⁷

While the reluctance of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce to accept graduates from the modern *lycée* is thus quite explainable, at the same time there were few educational institutions that had such a shortage of *bacheliers* as HEC. One evident reason for this was of course that a *Diplôm HEC* was something new, and thus had a low social and professional standing. In comparison with university studies or elite-school attendance, it provided the students with few “privileges” on the labor market. For this reason, many of its students came to attend other institutions of higher education at the same time as they undertook business training at HEC. The Faculty of Law was the most common or popular place to enroll. Apart from providing useful knowledge for a future businessman or employee, it qualified him also for a career within the public bureaucracy, something a degree from HEC did not. The CCIP had had little success in connecting the school with the career tracks that existed within the state services. The president’s request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early 1880s, concerning HEC graduates right to apply for the consul examination, was met with a flat refusal.⁷⁸ Negative messages of this kind made it even more difficult for HEC to attract applicants from the well-to-be families, as had been its ambition. In addition, the notion that business was a lower and unworthy calling, compared to engineering or the liberal professions, was widespread. For long, this kept the elite from making use of HEC as an

⁷⁶ In French, the graduates of the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) are most often referred to as the “normaliens”, signifying their superior status and position within the French (intellectual) elite.

⁷⁷ Slagstad, Rune (1998). The German *Realschulen* triumphed over the classics around 1900, after more than half a century of rivalry.

⁷⁸ Meuleau, Marc (1981). The practice of combining business and university studies, particularly law, is still very common in France.

institution of professional learning. “[O]nly such people go into business as are too stupid or lazy to study, or too poor to attend higher schools.”⁷⁹

Statistics developed by Marc Meuleau, the author of HEC’s official history, confirm this too, even though professional categories are difficult to compare historically – as they change both content and status over time.⁸⁰ But it seems as if the business graduates’ social origins were originally both “smaller” and “lower” than the CCIP’s initial targets. To begin with, few of the graduates’ fathers were owners and directors of family business and industries, or lawyers. On the contrary, they represented the commercial and the *petty bourgeoisie*, being sons of small business owners, traders, and shopkeepers.⁸¹ Others were part of the rising or new middle classes or salaried employees. Among this new class, educational investments became a crucial social strategy, writes the German historian Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “for the purpose of giving their children the possibility of a career not based primarily on manual labour or for the purpose of acquiring, in addition to the economic a certain amount of cultural capital”.⁸² That HEC was “used” in this way is interesting, but not very surprising. Compared to the *grandes écoles*, HEC was both one year shorter and less expensive, simply because it did not require any preparation. Those who were accepted for studies at Polytechnique or Centrale had often prepared for many years beforehand, a costly affair for many families. Haupt’s point about the petty bourgeois as a transit class overlaps, therefore, quite well with the ways in which ambitious middle-class families made use of HEC as a vehicle for upward mobility.⁸³ Culturally, these families were excluded from the nineteenth-century notion of “the elite”, due to their lack of property and/or formal training, and thus a professional identity of their own.

⁷⁹ Edmund J. James made this remark about the European attitude towards business education in 1893, when traveling across the Continent on mission for the American bankers’ association. He concluded thus by saying that “In this respect also Europe has its lessons for us, but they are of the warning sort, and its system offers us little to imitate and much to avoid” (James, Edmund J, (1893a)

⁸⁰ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 184, Annexe 4.

⁸¹ Ibid.: 117, Tableau VIII, 141.

⁸² Haupt, Heinz-Gerhard (1993).

⁸³ Ibid.: 311.

State Recognition provides the Business Schools with More Men

The republican idea of citizenship and the “rights of man” won new victories in France towards the end of the nineteenth century. The introduction of the *école républicaine* in the early 1880s was one result of this. Compulsory military service was another, though the idea as such was far from new.⁸⁴ Since the French Revolution, a military system based on French citizens had been in place, which was to replace the professional army belonging to the *Ancien Régime*, but as discharges could be bought for money it had had few practical implications for most social groups other than the peasantry.⁸⁵ The military law of 1889, however, represented a break with this tradition. By stating that “L’obligation du service est égale pour tous”, the law made it considerably more difficult both to escape and to buy discharges when one was enlisted.⁸⁶ As a matter of fact, only enrollment in higher education was considered of equal value with a military service. This provided a strong incentive for continuing to study once the *bac* was attained, and, at the same time, the right to provide exemption from military service became desirable for any “serious” providers of higher education, such as the business schools.

The *grandes écoles* were, in many ways, guaranteed the privilege of being included in the list of institutions countable as “higher education”, and so were the universities. In spite of that, the law of 1889 went further by affirming that, “students enrolled in commercial education on a higher level were given the possibility to obtain two years of exemption from military service consisting of three”.⁸⁷ For the business schools, this statement was of utmost importance. Immediately after the new rules were introduced, the number of applicants began to climb. The ESC of Marseilles, for example, experienced a doubling of students – from 120 to 211 – between 1890 and 1900.⁸⁸ And for the establishment in boulevard Malesherbes, the years between 1890 and 1904 were, in the words of Meuleau, marked by a “remarquable progression”.⁸⁹ After the 1889 law, the number of HEC graduates passed one hundred, and thereafter stabilized

⁸⁴ Hippler, Thomas (2001).

⁸⁵ Crépin, Annie (1998).

⁸⁶ Ibid.: 225, quoting Jean Monteilhet (1926): *Les institutions militaires de la France*: 231.

⁸⁷ Piretti, Jean-Marie (1996): 237.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 35.

with an average of 120 a year. But, the new conscription rules not only gave the existing business schools more men, the law also encouraged new institutions to be established. Lille, Montpellier, and Nantes all got their own business schools during the 1890s, accompanied with alumni organizations, whose only aim was to promote and protect the professional interests of graduates.⁹⁰ In accordance with the elite-school vocabulary, these institutions were known as “the former students”, i.e.: the *anciens élèves*, or simply *anciens*,

At HEC, the new regulations were more than welcomed by the *anciens*, as they were useful tools in helping it reach its social and professional ambitions. After the *concours* was introduced for the first time in 1892, it became somewhat more selective in accepting students, but it was never comparable with the elite schools. During the 1890s, the number of applicants was still roughly double the number of students who were admitted. The new conscription rule of 1905 put, however, a drastic end to this, due to the fact that the decree gave no recognition to the business schools.⁹¹ As a result, students of HEC and other business schools were no longer granted the privilege of two years exemption from the French national service. A change of this kind echoed the reinforcement of republican values, like equality and liberty, which took place in the years after the Dreyfus Affair. With the emergence of mass politics in France, it was increasingly difficult to give social privileges to certain social groups – at least openly. For the business schools, this meant yet another setback.

As soon as the new conscription rules were made public, the number of applicants dropped significantly for all the French business schools. The ESC of Bordeaux received, for example, only 37 applicants for 65 places in 1905, while the one in Rouen decided to admit only 7 students for the 45 places available. In Paris, the situation was a bit better, but HEC had to give up the competitive entry exams as well as its plan to establish

⁹⁰ The graduates of HEC were among the first to organize so-called “associations des anciens élèves”, but it was not until the conscriptions rules changed, and the student number rose, that these types of interest organizations managed to gain any influence or power in the development of the business schools.

⁹¹ Enrollment in higher studies was from 1905 not enough to get exemption from national service automatically. However, a university degree – or, in particular, a diploma from a *grandes écoles*, continued to give the social elite the possibilities of either advancing faster in the military hierarchy, and thus passing over to a more interesting and important service such as lieutenant etc., or of serving the nation by working as engineer or specialist of some kind. This practice is still very common among elite school

preparatory classes of the kind required by the *grandes écoles*. In 1905, all the 164 candidates who applied for HEC were admitted, and the dream of becoming an elite school was ruined. But, with the exception of the ESC of Le Havre and Nancy, which had to close down as result of the new rules, the business schools managed to adjust to a reality where the intention was “...de faire des négociants et non des dispensés du service militaire.”⁹² CCIP’s second business school, the ESCP, was for example reformed towards the practices of accounting.⁹³ There is nonetheless little doubt that the 1905-law had profound, not to say dramatic, consequences for the French business schools’ masculine ethos.⁹⁴

To follow the British historian John Tosh, masculinity was – and still is – more than a set of cultural attributes.⁹⁵ It is a social status, structuring men’s experiences and subjective identities, as much as the social status and standing of educational institutions. In the early 1900s, the undermining of masculinity which the business schools suffered from, seemed to be exacerbated by the fact that some of their graduates went into clerical work. Already in the early 1900s, middle-class women were to be found in most Parisian offices. This made male clerks undergo acute gender insecurity, which in turn also affected the business schools. Female competition in the work place seems in particular to have affected the social and professional standing of the regional business schools. As has been pointed out, these schools all shared the aim of educating men for both managerial responsibilities and general office work. This ambiguous social targeting was further reinforced by the decrease of well-qualified applicants. Almost none of the candidates in the provinces had obtained the *bac*, which reduced the social distinction between higher and lower commercial education. Hence, the only secure hallmark of belonging or aspiring to the upper level was the sex of the student body, as the business schools were defined by their male “privileges”. It seems, moreover, reasonable to argue

students by teaching French to foreigners abroad, working in the French administrative corps overseas, conducting scientific research etc.

⁹² Scieb, P.A (1971): *L'École Supérieure de Commerce de Rouen, 1871 – 1971* (ESC Rouen): 54, referred to in Jean-Marie Piretti (1996): 239.

⁹³ It was for this reason also given a new name; École Supérieure Pratique de Commerce et d'Industrie (kept until 1928).

⁹⁴ The introduction of compulsory military service had, according to Thomas Hippler (2001), a standardizing effect on the French masculine culture, as it tied not only maleness to the national service, but also the civic duties to the male sex.

that a position of social inferiority and masculine job anxieties was aggravated by the business schools' lack of ability to develop a content of "their own".⁹⁶ The commercial orientation, as it was expressed in business schools' curricula, was to a small extent elaborated scientifically. Although a school like HEC did extensive commercial training, it lacked the kind of theoretical base that was being developed in the German *Handelshochschulen* – bridging business administration and technique with economics.⁹⁷

Competition, Differentiating and Institutional Hierarchies

In 1914, nearly ten years after the institutional recession caused by the changing conscription rules, the French field of higher business education counted for 15 establishments and an average of 1,130 students.⁹⁸ The most important schools were situated in Paris, with HEC on the top. Those of Bordeaux, Lyon and Marseilles were also fairly well acknowledged, yet still unmistakably inferior to the *grandes écoles*, both in terms of selectivity and social prestige. The CCIP tried to make up for the inferior position of the business schools on several occasions. The *concours* was, for instance,

⁹⁵ Tosh, John (1994/1998): 77.

⁹⁶ But, despite this academic and social distrust of higher business education, a new business school was created in Paris in the early 1900s; i.e. *École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales* (ESSEC), as a Catholic alternative to existing system. It was an open secret that many of the French business schools, at least in the north and northwest, were heavily influenced by protestant and Jewish values. The only institution educating Catholic employees in Paris was the one in rue Saint-Roch, but as this was a school of lower level it was never any real alternative to the secular business schools. The Economical Institute (IE), which was ESSEC's institutional forerunner, was therefore viewed as an important step in complementing the Catholic alternative of higher education, represented by institutions like the Catholic Institute of Paris (ICP). The separation of the State and the Catholic Church in 1905 strengthened in many ways this urge for a religious alternative to the systems supported by the secular French Republic. The affinity between religion and business education exposed after 1905 underscores, moreover, the private character of the business schools. Seen in relation to the French State and its republican school system, the business schools operated, to a large extent, at the margins. For more on ESSEC, see Valérie Languille (1995); (1997).

⁹⁷ Redlich, Fritz (1958), Meyer, Heinz-Dieter (1998). The foundation of the new orientation of German higher business education came about with the opening of the *Handelshochschulen* of Leipzig (1898), Cologne (1901), and Berlin (1906). The business school of Berlin was, according to Redlich, especially innovative, with a curriculum broken down into six elements: economics, law, geography, commodities, science and technology, commercial technique, languages and humanities. During the first decade of 1900, these elements were elaborated further, and drawn in a direction of applied science. According to Heinz-Dieter Meyer, the six-element core was streamlined and a new curriculum was build around business economics and political economy, and a university discipline developed in most European countries in the nineteenth century. In addition, teaching was provided in law, languages, insurance, geography, physics and chemistry, philosophy and so-called general education. By this shift of syllabus, the bias towards trade and law was weakened if not erased completely and replaced by a new and highly structured cumulative curriculum.

reinstated in 1912, but was again given up.⁹⁹ The number of applicants was in heavy flux, dropping or climbing seriously from one year to the other, which made it very difficult for the administration to operate on behalf of own interests and premises, or to implement new strategies to increase the student population.¹⁰⁰ Several were tried out, of which some more successful than others, not the least because of the outbreak of World War One.

In every respect, 1914 was a difficult year for the French. Yet, for the regional business schools the problems leaped up even before the war started and students were sent to the battlefields. Like previous years, the main worry was related to the number of paying applicants, but in February/March 1914 the director of the business schools of Dijon wanted a change. Rather than using the unglamorous title “*école supérieure de commerce*”, he started to advertise for applicants under the well-regarded title “*École des Hautes Études Commerciales de Dijon*”. The same thing also happened in Marseille, with the consequence that the Parisian Chamber of Commerce became furious. Believing that the title “higher commercial studies” was their property, the president wrote to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, requiring immediate state action on their behalf.¹⁰¹ In a letter dated the 21st of March 1914, the president wrote that the logo “HEC” belonged to the CCIP, and should not be used by other French institutions or Chambers of commerce than the one in Paris. This qualified it, in his opinion, for the right to issue its own diploma:¹⁰²

Le niveau des cours est donc forcément plus élevé à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (...)
L'enseignement y est organisé comme dans les grandes écoles du Gouvernement: les élèves suivent les cours par promotion à l'amphithéâtre, et sont astreints à des interrogations dirigées par un corps spécial d'examineurs. Le système des classes n'y existe pas comme dans les Ecoles supérieures de Commerce....¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Magliulo, Bruno (1982): 16.

⁹⁹ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 37.

¹⁰⁰ AN, Coté: CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 29 – 31; évolution des conditions de concours d'entrée, droit de propriété du titre HEC et écoles supérieure de commerce.

¹⁰¹ AN, Coté: CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 30: Letter from CCIP to the Ministre du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, dated the 15th of July 1914.

¹⁰² AN, Coté: CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 30: Letter from CCIP to the Ministre du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, dated the 21st of March 1914.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

According to the reference mentioned above, HEC differentiated itself from the regional business schools for two reasons. To begin with, HEC students were organized according to years and taught in amphitheater, and not in smaller classes. Secondly, the teachers were to a larger extent lecturing rather than teaching the students. Did this not qualify it for its own diploma, comparable to those issued by the *grandes écoles*? The answer from the Minister was resolute and complete.¹⁰⁴ In a letter dated the 14th of June, he wrote:

Je me suis rallié à cette manière de voir et j'ai, en conséquence adressée à tous les directeurs des écoles supérieures de commerce reconnues par l'Etat, une circulaire les informant que le Ministre du Commerce n'hésiterait pas à retirer le bénéfice de la reconnaissance, avec tous les avantages qu'il comporte (subventions, bourses etc.) aux établissements relevant de son Département qui continueraient, directement ou indirectement, à se prévaloir du titre d'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales.¹⁰⁵

As stated, the acronym HEC was not to be used by anyone else other than the CCIP. The Minister of Commerce and Industry had ensured this by informing all the regional schools that none of them were entitled to make use of "hautes études commerciales" when campaigning for their programs. If they did, despite the warning, the schools would run the risk of loosing both state support and recognition. When addressing the head of the ESC of Dijon, the Minister wrote "je dois vous faire observer que l'école placée sous votre direction n'a jamais été reconnue par l'Etat sous cette appellation...".¹⁰⁶ Still, it was not enough to be granted the privilege of issuing its own diploma.

When the question of allowing HEC to issue a specific degree turned up, the general inspector of technical education disagreed in fact with the school's uniqueness. HEC was, in his opinion, not as different from the other business schools. Its level could at least not qualify it for any privileges relating to certification. The inspector argued

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: Séance du 17 juillet, le Comité de Législation Commerciales, confirmed that: "1er que la Chambre de commerce de Paris a un droit exclusif sur la dénomination Ecole des hautes études commerciales. 2em que l'autorisation donnée par le Ministre, par une autre école, fut-elle située ailleurs qu'à Paris, de porter le même nom, porterait atteinte au droit de la Chambre de commerce de Paris".

¹⁰⁵ AN, Coté: CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 30: Letter from L'Inspecteur général de l'Enseignement technique à Monsieur le Ministre du Commerce, de l'industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, dated Paris the 18th of June 1914.

instead for the need of a state degree that was to be granted in relation to knowledge, not institutional belonging. In his own words; “non au profit du seul établissement, mais pour récompenser équitablement l’ardeur au travail, les connaissances acquises et les aptitudes’ des étudiants plus distingués de toutes les écoles”.¹⁰⁷ The building block of such a degree would be a license in the commercial sciences, which would have the result of downplaying the role of the single institutions and the free market as the strongest elements of coordination to the advantage of knowledge. This critical inspector even questioned why institutions similar to the HEC could not share the title “hautes études commerciales”. Why should only “[l]’école du boulevard Malesherbes a bénéficié d’un titre qui est très goûté des familles et d’administration”, he asked.¹⁰⁸ In his opinion, there were few things that made graduates of HEC superior to those of the other business schools. As a matter of fact, they were recruited more or less by the same type of people, to more or less to the same administrative business positions. Thus, it was the business schools themselves that constructed this difference, between themselves and the “others” by – in one way or another – trying to give the impression that precisely *their* graduates have climbed the professional ladder the highest. He continues,

Les écoles supérieures prétendent que leurs anciens élèves occupent des situations très importantes. Il suffit, disent les Directeurs, de parcourir les annuaires des associations pour relever les noms les plus honorables connus dans le haut négoce, l’industrie, l’armement, les assurances, les grandes compagnies des chemins de fers, les sociétés coloniales etc. Deux ou trois anciens élèves font même partie du Parlement.¹⁰⁹

The strategy of the business schools was, according to the inspector, easy to understand. By stressing the success of a few graduates, and showing how they had managed to climb to positions of great power and prestige, the *anciens élèves* literally tried to make themselves bigger than they actually were. Rather than being directors, most graduates were in fact only business functionaries. Not that these jobs were

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ AN Coté CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 30: Letter from L’Inspecteur général de l’Enseignement technique à Monsieur le Ministre du Commerce, de l’Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, dated Paris the 18th of June 1914.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

considered bad jobs. Being a functionary or a white-collar worker at the beginning of the 1900s was relatively well regarded, but (s)he was not perceived as being equal with a business owner, or a director.

As the name indicates, the white-collar workers were placed between the director(s) and the blue-collar workers. In that sense, they were a marginal group – though increasingly numerous in real numbers – socially balanced between the elite and the lower classes, and professionally between the owners and the manual workers. But like the blue-collar workers, office employees were also dependent on selling their labor on an open labor market, to those owning the means of production. This meant that the value of their work was set in accordance with formal qualifications, such as educational credentials and gender, among others.¹¹⁰ What credentials were being valued the most was, however, unclear.

Within the commercial sector there were few formal rules concerning professional qualification in the early 1900s. This made the conditions, under which the business schools operated, jungle-like. As Pierre-Henri Haas has noted, the field of commercial education almost cried out for more regulation and state control at this time. A common business degree of the kind set out by the educational inspector had yet to come about. With the outbreak of the world war, the business schools were again left to themselves. The consequence of this was that those that were owned by powerful institutions, like the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, which were rich in both human and economic capital would shape the future development. An arrangement of this kind reinforced the hierarchical relationships between the Parisian and the provincial institutions, between the HEC and the “others”. The part which suffered most from this, however, apart from the local business schools, was the commercial disciplines.

In France, few if any saw the advantages of developing business practice into a form of codified knowledge.¹¹¹ Instead, symbolic boundaries were drawn by highlighting the professional career of some very successful graduates, or by branding the business

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Laqueur, Thomas (1994): lecture at UC Berkeley, 20.09.1994. History course 190A, “Society and the Sexes in Europe and America”, organized by Carla Hesse, Thomas Laqueur and Mary Ryan, Fall term 1994.

¹¹¹ Locke, Robert (1984).

schools in accordance with the cultural taste of the bourgeois families and the administration of firms and companies. As for the case of HEC, this meant installing selection methods similar to those of the elite schools, and by seeking legal protection for their title “hautes études commerciales”, evidently “très goûtée des familles et d'administration”.¹¹²

Concluding Remarks

Local businessmen were the driving force behind the many *écoles supérieures de commerce* established in the period 1870 to 1914, colored as they were by the social transformation that Europe underwent during the times of industrialization, colonialization and democratization. New identities of class, gender and nation emerged as a result of this, as much as caused it, upon which professionalism and “educationalism” became essential for the identification of the new middle-class man. The French business schools were an evident expression of this new masculine formula. Or, to put it the other way around, making business schools was a way of affirming the masculinity of the commercial classes, since the definition of manhood was increasingly associated with the experience of “being professional”, “having a degree”, and “a career”.

However, to begin with, few of the French business schools managed to live up to the social selectivity which was so typical of the French educational system. Not all institutions desired to do so either, an attitude which underlines that the movement for business education was far from coherent or single. It differed between, as much as within, institutions, towns and regions. For instance, the provincial movement that commenced in Alsace in the 1860s was far less ambitious and elitist than the Parisian advances in the same field, but according to the hyper-civilized Parisians, practical knowledge was evidently inferior to theory and abstraction. This made the *grandes écoles* of engineering the only model available when the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) decided to create HEC in the late 1860s, a model that was – and still is – best expressed through the concept of *culture générale*.

¹¹² AN Coté CAC 900502, CSP 771189 ART 30: Letter from L'Inspecteur général de l'Enseignement technique à Monsieur le Ministre du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, dated Paris the 18th of June 1914.

By using Fritz Ringer's work, this chapter has shown how this internalized as much as institutionalized the idea of the cultivated mind and man. In contrast to the business schools of the provinces, HEC combined subjects of general culture with law, political economy and accounting, and tried several times to introduce competitive entry requirements of the kind practiced by the elite schools of engineering. But the elitist ambition of HEC was also visible in its teaching. In boulevard Malesherbes, the students were not taught according to class and year, but lectured in a large amphitheater, and it seems as if it was this pedagogical strategy that gave the CCIP the legal right to the title "hautes études commerciales" in 1914.

On the professional level, in contrast, the differences between HEC and the "others" were far less apparent. Many graduates of HEC both commenced and ended their careers as clerks and business functionaries, even if the school's administration and alumni preferred to define them as future "chefs des maisons" and "directeurs de sociétés". This exhibits that symbolic boundaries were drawn upon both the professional and social images found in the world of business as well as in society at large. The importance of social class was, for instance, mentioned explicitly in relation to the launching of HEC in 1881. An additional boundary in this self-forming process was masculinity. Both in relation to professional targeting and teaching, the business schools played out the social hierarchies which existed between the sexes. Yet, as long as women had no access to the knowledge celebrated by the male elite, the masculine norm could be taken for granted. In Oslo – or Christiania as it then was named – this was somewhat different.¹¹³

It is the combination of knowledge and the ability to reason that creates the practical and useful businessman

Christian Larssen¹¹⁴

CHAPTER FOUR

Norway: Full-time Courses for Men, Evening Classes for Women

The commercial classes of Norway expressed a need for academic business training at several occasions in the nineteenth century, in particular after the trade law of 1842 was inaugurated.¹¹⁵ By putting an end to the economic privileges which were so characteristic of the mercantilist regime, this law enabled almost anyone to go into business.¹¹⁶ Even unmarried, divorced or widowed women over the age of 25 were given the right to make a living through buying and selling.¹¹⁷ Hence, finding a system that could act as a substitute for the old "male" arrangement, one that would combine an apprenticeship period of four years with a written exam, was in the interest of most businessmen, and especially of those who had ambitions for the commercial class itself.¹¹⁸

All the same, institutions of business instruction gained no governmental support in Norway. And its only university, The Royal Fredric's University from 1811 gave any

¹¹³ Christiania / Kristiania (after 1877) was the official name of the Norwegian capital until 1925.

¹¹⁴ Christian Larssen, the director of *Christiania Handelsgymnasium* between 1875 and 1898 (CHG/OHG) stated this when inaugurating the school's new building in Munch's street number 4, in 1885. See Haakon Syversen et al (1975): 1.

¹¹⁵ Trade Law of the 8th of August 1842.

¹¹⁶ The former trade law was dated the 8th of June 1818. In order to get a trading license, the applicants had to be male, over 25 years old and have a minimum of four years experience as a commercial trainee. Additionally, he had to pass an exam where he had to prove that he could write Norwegian properly without any spelling mistakes, understand, read and to some extent write English, French and German, as well as know how to keep his books (Øystein Sandberg, red. 1954: 20 – 21).

¹¹⁷ Mordt, Gerd (1991): 1. Women's access to trade under the conditions mentioned above was declared in § 2. Married women were granted similar rights in 1894 (Sigrid Bugge Hansen, 1914: 221).

¹¹⁸ RA: 1251,2/12, box 189, Historisk oversikt over merkantil utdanning, Groth, Erling (1967): 1.

advances it could make the thumbs down, dominated as it was by lawyers and theologians, professions that, in the nineteenth-century Norway, went under the label of government officials (*embetsmenn*).¹¹⁹ The initial Norwegian institutions established for the training of future businessmen resulted thus from the initiative, as well as funds, of the commercial bourgeoisie, just as in France. The very first of them, established in 1875, was both created and financed by the Commercial Society of Christiania (CHF/OHG).¹²⁰ But unlike the French encounter, where the business schools' maleness was communicated indirectly by adapting to the elitist norm of the *grandes écoles*, CHF fashioned an upper-secondary program for young women shortly after the male school was set up. Hence, an explicit two-sex model of higher business education developed in Oslo, teaching men and women separately and according to different syllabi.

This chapter emphasizes the creation and expansion of this dual model from the early 1870s until approximately 1917. It discusses in particular the extent to which gender equality in the so-called "higher schools", approved by the law of 1896, moderated or changed the two-sex model which already existed. We commence, however, with some of the preconditions for its founding; in particular, the expanding bourgeois culture which accompanied the appearance of an industrial economy in the periphery of Europe.

A Bourgeois Culture in Expansion

During the nineteenth century, Norway gradually integrated into the international economy. Thanks to the liberal doctrine shaping Europe's political economy between the

¹¹⁹ Slagstad, Rune (2000): 21. The report following the decision to open a Norwegian University in 1811 entailed a proposition to create an independent faculty of "state-economy" in Oslo. However, this suggestion was never carried out. Instead was thought to include the commercial disciplines in the program, but also this idea failed. See Olav Harald Jensen & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 15 – 16, based upon *Det Kongelige Fredriks Universitet 1811 – 1911*, bind II (1911): XLV, 171, 178 – 179.

Embetsmann (singular) – *embetsmenn* (plural) were offices of the Crown and central figures in the social, political and military life of Norway in the first half of the 1800, and in particular after Norway's break with Denmark in 1814. Originally they were of aristocratic origin, but after 1814 they were all graduates of the university or the military academy, and later appointed by the king in council and enjoyed tenure. An English translation could be "senior state official", although this concept does not entail the cultural or historical significance of the term "embetsmann" in Norwegian.

¹²⁰ Not until many years later, as other cities got similar institutions, was it included in the educational portfolio of the Oslo Municipality, and thus reserved the inhabitants of the capital (Støren, Wilhelm & John I. Skjæran, 1988: 15 – 16).

1840s and the 1870s, the country in many ways recuperated its strong position within traditional markets of timber, fish and shipping.¹²¹ The domestic markets expanded too, along with urbanization and population growth. From the beginning to the end of the so-called long nineteenth century, the Norwegian population rose from 0,9 to 1,8 million.¹²² One of the visible results of this was the rise of new urban centers. The Norwegian capital Oslo, or Christiania, grew the most. Over the century, its number of inhabitants increased ten fold.¹²³ It 1885, its hosted as many as 130 000 residents, which made it the biggest town of the country, connected – if not very well in terms of communication – to a populous hinterland.¹²⁴

Another noticeable outcome of an active national economy was the growth of mechanical production. The capital and the districts around the Oslo fjord were the first areas to be industrialized and were the most industrialized. In fact, many a farmer boy or girl came to leave the countryside in order to pursue an urban life throughout this century, a move that for most led to jobs in factories near Oslo, or in the homes of the capital's bourgeoisie – as maids and servants. A few even started out working behind a shopkeeper's counter, while only the very few countryside men made it into the university and other "higher" schools. For a long time, these institutions were reserved for those belonging to the *haute bourgeoisie*, and its exclusive administrative "nobility". The group of "commercial patricians" had, on the other hand, lost much of its influence and social position after the liberation from Denmark in 1814.¹²⁵ The new union with Sweden reinforced the hegemonic position of the well-educated elite of *embetsmenn*, not only in terms of political power and social recognition, but also in terms of knowledge. As in most other countries, the knowledge of the ruling class was based on classical ideals of general education, combined with a professional status. Most of the bureaucratic elite were lawyers, theologians or officers by training, and this combination of decorum and professionalism delayed for a long time the development of a more practical and

¹²¹ Danielsen, Rolf et al. (1995): 234 – 237, Hodne, Fritz (1980).

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Consequently Oslo is used for the whole period, even if Christiania (later Kristiania, 1877) was the official name on Norway's capital until 1925. When it comes to name of institutions, schools and societies I use Christiania.

¹²⁴ Myhre, Jan Eivind (1990): 9, 414.

¹²⁵ The Norwegian constitution was written in 1814.

specialized type of higher education. But, just as the nineteenth-century Norwegian towns were gradually becoming bigger, new occupational and social “rooms” were being created and filled by the rural immigrants’ entrance into business. This not only brought the Christian ideas and the Protestant emphasis on individual freedom into the commercial sphere, but it also pushed the idea of business education further, although its promoters – the emerging middle classes – were anything but homogenous.

The new commercial classes of nineteenth-century Norway are comparable with the petty and middle bourgeoisie of France in terms of the jobs they created and filled. They were business entrepreneurs, merchants, small industrialists and large and small storekeepers, and were also distinguished from the old commercial families by their emphasis on the idea of equality among people.¹²⁶ It differed also from most of its European counterparts. By being considerably more democratically oriented, both culturally and ideologically, the new middle classes of the nineteenth century had a largely egalitarian outlook.¹²⁷ The historian Francis Sejersted, among others, explains this by its provincial grounding and its connection with Norwegian lay-evangelism.¹²⁸ Apparently, the bonds between the new commercial bourgeoisie or “petty-bourgeoisie” and the evangelic movements that swept across the country from the latter part of the eighteenth century were at times very strong.¹²⁹ Above all, Hans Nielsen Hauges’ pietistic lay evangelism and his dissident behavior seem to have had a strong influence.¹³⁰ By taking a radical stand against the church and its clergy, his movement was largely anti-elitist. Later in his career, Hauge became known for supporting women’s right to preach the word of God.¹³¹ In the early nineteenth century, this practice indeed was radical, and

¹²⁶ Sejersted, Francis: (1993): 17 – 46.

¹²⁷ Ibid.: Sejersted has through the concept of “democratic capitalism” tried to explain as much as describe the development of modern capitalism in Norway. See in particular his article “Den norske “Sonderweg””, in 1993: 163 – 208.

¹²⁸ Slagstad, Rune (1998).

¹²⁹ Strandbakken, Pål (1987). Sejersted (1993) as well as Slagstad (1998) point out that little knowledge has been developed about the role played by religion in general, and Protestantism in particular, during the emergence of modern capitalism in Norway. All seem, however, to agree that it did play a role – a significant role if we are to believe Sejersted’s argument that it was fundamental for the shaping of the new bourgeois ethos during the 1800s. The research project “The Christian moral-tradition from 1814 to the present”, financed by the Norwegian Research Council was established to look more closely into the issue. See Svein Aage Christoffersen et al (eds. 1996).

¹³⁰ Furre, Berge (1996).

¹³¹ Sandvik, Hilde (1999): 128.

is viewed by scholars as a crucial factor in the emergence of an alternative – and a largely more egalitarian – gender system within the bourgeois ideology of separate spheres.¹³² Others argue that Hauge's moral spirit of modesty and veraciousness was crucial in the construction of the mindset of the new bourgeois class, and thus the overall societal and capitalist development of modern Norway.¹³³ By arguing that the danger with business was to be found in the practice of money-making as such, but in the "evil wisdom" of the rich, meaning their lack of moral guidelines, Hauge encouraged people to exchange goods for money, thus contributing to a more just and equal redistribution of economic wealth.¹³⁴ As stated by Rune Slagstad, this provided the profit-maximizing businessman with moral legitimacy, while simultaneously talking about the need for institutional reforms in religious and secular practices.¹³⁵

The "friends", whom the fellow believers of Hauge were called, made up a significant part of the commercial classes of cities like Stavanger, Trondheim and Drammen in the early- and mid-nineteenth century.¹³⁶ Hence, the protestant ethic, as Max Weber coined it, seems to have had a positive effect on the capitalist development also in Norway. But the "friends" were also considerably active as businessmen in an old commercial towns like Bergen, which was once part of the German Hansa-league.¹³⁷ The reason for this was the fact that Hauge once had taken part in the town's commercial life himself. Like Hauge, his followers were businessmen of the so-called smaller format. As peddlers, tradesmen or retailers, this group stood in sharp contrast to the town's commercial establishment. The commercial class of Bergen was particularly known for its long tradition, but had not paid any interest in the issue of commercial training. The only exception was Hans Tank, and the all-male Harmonic Society (*Det Harmoniske Selskab*). When Tank died in 1803, part of his fortune was allocated to the teaching of the commercial "sciences", including bookkeeping.¹³⁸

¹³² Hagemann, Gro (1999): 207 – 208.

¹³³ Furre, Berge (1996), Sejersted, Francis (1993); (1996).

¹³⁴ Gilje, Nils (1994).

¹³⁵ Slagstad, Rune (1998): 135 – 136.

¹³⁶ Oftestad, Bernt T. (1998): 77 – 83. For a picture of the importance of Hans Nielsen Hauge in Bergen see Dagfinn Breistein (1955).

¹³⁷ Breistein, Dagfinn (1955).

¹³⁸ Sandberg, Øystein (red. 1954): 15 – 16, Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 20.

... a school where the children of honored and brave men could be taught in Religion and Moral, Drawing, Calligraphy, Accounting and Mathematics, Commercial Science and Bookkeeping, History and Geography, Statistics and Natural History, Technology, Physics, as well as the Danish, German, French and English languages, and where it from early on could improve their physical strength through gymnastic exercises.¹³⁹

Tank was, as his testimony illustrates, a modern man, highly influenced by the new ideology of utility – or utilitarianism. However, in Norway such ideas did not break through until the 1830s and 1840s, as part of Anton Martin Schweigaard's program to modernize Norway by combining scientific modernism with general educative ideas.¹⁴⁰ It took, therefore, almost half a century to realize Tank's wish. In 1850, a school carrying his name eventually opened in Bergen, yet at a level that was largely inferior to what Tank had had in mind.

Its pedagogy was moreover rather general. Commercial "disciplines" like accounting were, for instance, left out to the advantage of subjects of general education or *Bildung*. The demand for specialized knowledge was still more than modest. Two of Bergen's three *borgerskoler*, whose aim was to educate those of the middle-classes who were not heading for academia or the liberal professions, also provided courses in both accounting and bookkeeping.¹⁴¹ This limited for a long time the need for an autonomous commercial school of the kind Tank wanted to create. Actually, Tank's wish was not fulfilled until Norway got a new type of lower-secondary education in 1869, the public

¹³⁹ Ibid.: 15 – 16 Citation in original: "...saa højeligen [trænger] til en Borger- eller Realskoles Oprettelse, hvor honette og brave Mænds Børn kunde blive vedbørligen underviste i Religion og Moral, Tegning, Skjønsskrivning, Regning og Matematik, Handelsvidenskab og Bogholderi, Historie og Geografi, Statistik og Naturhistorie, Athropologi, Technologi og Fysik, saavelsom det danske, tydske, franske og engelske Sprog efter Grammatik, og hvor der tillige kunde sørges for deres legemlige Færdigheder ved passende gymnastiske Øvelser...."

¹⁴⁰ Slagstad, Rune (2000): 22.

¹⁴¹ The term *borgerskole* indicates a lower-secondary school wherein modern "realist" subjects were taught as opposed to the classics which dominated the older system. In the early 1800s, many Norwegian towns developed schools of this kind (some also called *realskoler*) through the initiative of the bourgeoisie, therefore its name *borgerskole* (Bürgerschule in German), with the aim of educating those of the middle-class that did not go into academia or the liberal professions. Hence, most of the schools also taught accounting and bookkeeping. Bergen, for example, hosted two private and one half-public *borgerskoler* in 1847 (*Bergens Realskole*, *Det Andersonske Institutt*, *Laadings skole*), the latter two of which provided teaching in basic commercial skills.

middelskolen.¹⁴² The idea behind this novel type of public schooling was that it would prepare male students for the Norwegian gymnasium, while, at the same time, replacing the privately-owned *borgerskoler*. This dual function was secured through creating two different “tracks”; i.e. one in the classics, which qualified students for admission into the *gymnasium*, and one in the spoken languages that enabled boys to sign up as apprentices after graduation. Its creation therefore signaled the beginning of the end of an explicitly class-based school system in Norwegian towns. Only a few of the old bourgeois schools managed to continue as private “middle-schools” after the state guaranteed public instruction on an equal level.

From Slagstad’s point of view, increasing state involvement in lower – and upper – secondary education was the result of a major shift in Norwegian politics and pedagogical thinking in the latter part of the nineteenth century. People like Ole Vig and Hartvig Nissen, demonstrated a mounting will to integrate – or to respond to – modern ideas like utility and equality before the law.¹⁴³ The reformists’ slogan of “enlightenment of the people” was fulfilled by a unitary school system with the creation the so-called “People’s School” (*Folkeskolen*) in 1889, an elementary school free of charge. An additional effect of the reformist project was the abolishment of the classical program in the Norwegian gymnasium in 1896.¹⁴⁴ The latter decree made coeducation compulsory in all institutions of higher learning, which meant that female pupils no longer could be excluded from the so-called “higher schools” because of their sex. At that point, a two-sex system of higher business learning had however already developed in the capital, consisting of full-time day-courses for men and evening-classes for women. Its institutional forerunner was the Commercial Institute (*Handelsinstituttet*), founded by Fritz Heinrich Frølich among others, an example of the self-made man. From having started as an apprentice in an Oslo firm, Frølich managed to climb the social ladder by

¹⁴² *Middelskolen* was introduced by law in 1869, and aimed at giving the preparation needed to enter upper-secondary school (*gymnas*) while simultaneously fulfilling the function of the old *borgerskoler*. The program was of three years duration. This publicly-owned school provided the pupils with two optional “tracks”, one in the classics and one in the modern spoken languages, also called the “English track”. Its program was, however, not free of charge. Even up to 1936, families had to pay fees in order to enroll their children in a “middle-school”.

¹⁴³ Slagstad, Rune (2000): 29.

¹⁴⁴ Kjelstadli, Knut (1990): 332 – 333.

setting up various commercial projects which were very successful.¹⁴⁵ He also set up the country's first commercial bank – *Christiania Bank og Kreditkasse* – the same year as the Commercial Institute (CI) welcomed its first young boys.

The 'Spirit of Association' provides Elementary Business Education

The formal owner of the CI, of which Frølich was a member, was an association of men calling themselves the Friends of Commerce. Like other contemporaries, Frølich and his male fellows began promoting their social and professional interests by setting up independent associations. For some, this growing self-awareness emerged merely as a response to the abolishment of economic privileges in the 1840s.¹⁴⁶ In areas like trade and craftsmanship this seems especially to have been the case, while others used the fraternity to channel their own interests into a political system controlled by the bureaucratic elite.¹⁴⁷ The Friends of Commerce seems, however, to have been a materialization of both purposes when it was formed in 1841.¹⁴⁸ Schweigaard's liberal trade law of 1842 triggered the need for both self-preservation and political action amongst its men, who in terms of wealth and power belonged to the capital's more solid businessmen. Its membership policies showed the obvious aspirations of the commercial bourgeoisie. No peddlers or small grocers could, for instance, apply for membership in the association. And the emerging class of lower functionaries later left the organization in order to set up on their own.¹⁴⁹ But despite this attempt to distinguish themselves from groups deemed socially inferior, the Friends of Commerce never managed to recruit the largest businessmen of the capital. Its approximately fifty members thus belonged to the emerging middle-class – those operating alongside the economic elite of industrialists and large-scale businessmen.

¹⁴⁵ Myhre, Jan Eivind (1990): 76 – 77. Frølich was like many of his equals, an immigrant from Denmark, though of Polish origins.

¹⁴⁶ Danielsen, Rolf et al (1995): 265.

¹⁴⁷ Until the middle of the 1870s, the Norwegian Parliament met only every three years. Thus, between each session the country was ruled by the bureaucratic elite of *embetsmenn* in cooperation with the Swedish throne.

¹⁴⁸ Myhre, Jan Eivind (1990): 109 – 110.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.: Myhre is here referring to Wilhelm Keilhaug (1951): '*Handelens Venner*' og Oslo *Handelstandsforening* (Oslo).

Concerning the trade law of 1842, the Friends of Commerce feared in particular the abolishment of the trade-exam, which secured a minimum level of knowledge among future businessmen. An additional *bête noire* was § 2, which spoke of women's right "to make a living through trade and commerce as long as the admissions [were] in accordance with their personal legal rights".¹⁵⁰ In the opinion of its members, such liberal policies were difficult to accept. For this reason, a letter was sent to the Norwegian Parliament in January 1843, wherein they expressed their deepest concerns with the recent developments within the commercial sphere. Merchants and industrialists from other parts of Norway joined in too, but their grumbling led nowhere. Shortly afterwards, the men decided instead to start an independent institute for commercial learning. It was to become a self-regulating alternative to state control of commercial activities.¹⁵¹

To begin with, this program benefited boys between 12 and 15 who wanted to start out as commercial trainees.¹⁵² The teaching, which was organized as a supplement to Oslo *borgerskole*, took place every Sunday before Church, and covered subjects like English, German and Norwegian, arithmetic, geography and composition. It became in fact a major success, despite its general character. At most, it trained about 100 pupils simultaneously, and after a while even young girls. As stated by Haakon Syversten et al, the CI accepted female applicants from relatively early on.¹⁵³ *How* early is, on the other hand, unknown, but there are reasons to believe that it was after the 1860s – as "more and more women invaded the office and the shops, as cashiers, writing assistants and most of all as 'store-virgins'".¹⁵⁴ A natural question, thus, is to what extent this exemplifies the deep democratic values that Francis Sejersted argues characterized the Norwegian nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. In line with Sejersted's argument, the direction in which Norwegian capitalism developed during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries vindicates its "democratic" character, because of the social and ideological composition

¹⁵⁰ Groth, Erling (1967): 1. The citation is taken from a letter to the Norwegian Parliament, written by the Friends of Commerce the 13th of January 1843. Citation in original: "at ernære sig ved Handel, forsaavidt som en saadan Adgang er forenelig med deres øvrige personlige Retsstilling."

¹⁵¹ Ibid. For instance twelve of Sandefjord's businessmen signed the petition of the Friends of Commerce.

¹⁵² Syversten, Haakon et al (1975): 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid.: 12.

¹⁵⁴ Skille, Nan Bentzen (2002): 1 refers to Oslo Handelsgymnasium (1928): *Det ett-årige eftermiddagskursus for kvinner gjennom 50 år* Citation in original: "flere og flere kvinner sivet inn på

of the groups promoting it.¹⁵⁵ Both Frølich and his friends belonged, as has been already said, to the new middle-class – or “petty-bourgeoisie” – which were embraced by Sejersted when he was creating his thesis of the Norwegian “Sonderweg”. Though, in terms of ideology, the Friends of Commerce stand out as less liberal or ideologically coherent than, for instance, liberal reformists like Schweigaard, who belonged to the educated elite. In their writings, at least, the Commercial Friends did not share the government’s liberal emphasis on *unmarried* women’s right to make a living through buying and selling. In fact, it was rather the opposite. Schweigaard’s trade law was a strong incentive for the creation of an additional status of “businesswomen”, if marriage was out of reach. Following Gerd Mordt analysis, as many as 40 unmarried or widowed women gained the right to trade in the capital between the years 1842 and 1850 – a right that enabled them to engage in trade on equal terms with men.¹⁵⁶ Only export continued to be a male privilege. Girls’ access to lower commercial education consequently had little to do with what Sejersted has called a “feminist-emancipatory element in the liberal ideal of equal treatment”.¹⁵⁷ It should instead be interpreted as a result of the growth of female employment in the commercial sector, just as Gerd Mordt argues that the legal changes in 1842 were merely economic and not ideologically motivated.¹⁵⁸

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, French businessmen undertook similar efforts to integrate women into lower commercial education at this time. The regional Chambers of commerce initiated this development by establishing commercial schools and evening courses for both married and unmarried women, from the 1870s onward, arguing that there was a growing need for commercial skills within these groups.¹⁵⁹ The commercial classes of Norway – or Oslo – were not alone in integrating women into lower business education. What distinguished the two cultures from each other, however, was the Norwegian attempt to teach boys and girls together, while coeducation was much less

kontorene og i forretningene, som kasseresker, hjelp til regne- og skrivearbeid og kanskje i aller største utstrekning som butikkjornfru.”

¹⁵⁵ Sejersted, Francis (1993): 10. Law abolished beside the nobility in 1814.

¹⁵⁶ Mordt, Gerd (1991), Sandvik, Hilde (1985/1992); (2002). Ibid.: 170 Citation in original: “Hele 40 kvinner skaffet seg handelsrett i perioden 1842-1850.”

¹⁵⁷ Sejersted, Francis (1978): 231, cited by Gerd Mordt (1991): 2 Citation in original: “et kvinneemansipatorisk element i liberalismens likebehandlingsidealer.”

¹⁵⁸ Mordt, Gerd (1991), Hagemann, Gro (1999): 189.

¹⁵⁹ See Chapter 3.

common in France. The evening course of the Tank's School in Bergen, created in 1888, for example, practiced coeducation from its opening day.¹⁶⁰ Given the relatively conservative culture of the town's ruling elite, liberal practices of this kind were quite daring. And, while the principal of Tank's School was originally skeptical about the idea of teaching boys and girls side by side, after trying it out he changed his mind. In the annual report he wrote; "coeducation caused no problems at all, on the contrary, it seems to have had a positive effect on the learning. The girls managed in fact to keep up the race longer than the boys, and visited thus the school more often".¹⁶¹

The inclusion of young girls at the CI was, subsequently, the beginning of a more general trend. The historian Ingeborg Fløystad states that coeducation was hotly debated in the Norwegian towns in the 1880s, due to the fact that women got access to the so-called "middle-exam" in 1878.¹⁶² For this reason, it is possible to say that the Norwegian commercial class, in addition to the political elite, was more egalitarian minded than their French counterpart. Coeducation was not the rule in elementary commercial schooling in France, although some municipalities were running mixed evening courses. But to take the inclusion of the "second sex" into the commercial estate as evidence of the inherent democratic ethic of the Norwegian "petty-bourgeoisie" is still a misleading interpretation. As will be shown, maleness – ensured through an explicit exclusion of female applicants – was a key feature of the commercial high school of Oslo when it opened in 1875. Likewise, it was case with the business program at Tank's School, which ran from 1899 to 1904.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Sandberg, Øystein (red. 1954): 35.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. Citation in original: "...ingen uorden fant sted ved fellesundervisningen, tvertimot synes den at femkalle en heldig kappestrid, og i regelen holdt pikene lenger ut og besøkte skolen mer stadig enn de fleste gutter."

¹⁶² Fløystad, Ingeborg (2003): 55. This exam was for a long time the precondition for entering the Norwegian *gymnasium*, and can be compared to the current French *collège*, or the nineteenth century *école secondaire – supérieure*, which in contrast to the *école primaire – primaire supérieure*, was open to middle-class children only. See Jean-Michel Gaillard (2000): 24 – 25.

¹⁶³ The idea of commercial education took, nevertheless, shape within the mid-nineteenth century's "spirit of association", which later served as a playground for the future political opposition, who spoke against the elitist regime of the bureaucratic elite. The Friends of Commerce was an early example of the emerging Norwegian "society of associations", to borrow a concept from Jens Arup Seip. Its later expansion, as part of the Commercial Society of Christiania (CHF), is moreover a good illustration of the ways in which new constellation of interests gradually replaced the vertical social ties with horizontal ones. Though, the CHF was seemingly less critical of the established knowledge regime than the emerging class of technical educated men. The middle-size businessmen who promoted the need for an institution of higher business

The Idea of a Business School in Christiania Takes Shape

The Commercial Society of Christiania (CHF), which resulted from a merger between the Friends of Commerce and another all-male society that allied lower functionaries and clerks, became an important promoter of higher business education in the second half of the century. But its educational project related not only to the political and professional changes that have been recounted above. Socio-economic forces were of importance too. Economic growth and expansion brought about major changes in the labor market of a city like Oslo, changes that in basic terms took place outside the old elite of *embetsmenn* as well as the new engineering profession, just as in France. Of course, the overall circumstances for trade and commerce were much more modest in the North than on the Continent. But from the 1860s onwards – as the “dual-Kingdom” of Sweden-Norway made various free trade treaties with foreign countries – the economy boomed. France and Norway signed one of them in 1869, and in the following years both experienced a radical economic expansion, transforming as well as enlarging the productive sectors. As result of this, the Norwegian economy also came more and more into line with – and dependent on – international exchange. Hence, the capital markets grew for the benefit of industrial entrepreneurs and more traditional businessmen. Yet compared to France, Norway industrialized both later and less rapidly. Major improvements were likewise made in these years in the mechanization of the more traditional fields, like in textile and engineering.

The production of spinning and weaving were located along the Aker river, which runs near the capital, while larger industrial complexes concerned with lumber and shipbuilding were located further out, along the Oslo fjord.¹⁶⁴ This left the inner-city more or less to the commercial classes, which initiated the small-scale industrial

learning in Norway held, in fact, a more humanistic background than the engineers. To some extent, this was quite natural as many of those taking the lead, such as the CHF, lacked a common educational experience. Like in France, most businessmen of the late-nineteenth century were autodidacts. Hence, their knowledge base was both unclear and many sided, as they had a loosely-defined body of knowledge derived through internships and on-the-job learning, whereas the engineers spoke the language of the modern sciences and production. But despite different knowledge paradigms and rivaling interests, both claimed political ownership in the “organizational vacuum” that – according to Seip – had given rise to the elitist regime of the *embetsmenn* (see Jens Arup Seip 1963, Rune Slagstad 1998, Knut Sogner 2003, Tore-Jørgen Hanish & Even Lange 1985).

¹⁶⁴ Songer, Knut (2001).

production of more ordinary consumer goods.¹⁶⁵ The retail traders were particularly active and innovative. Rather than importing new consumer goods from abroad, they began producing products like chocolate and lamp oil, soap and vinegar for sale in their own – or others' – stores. Norway hence was already an industrializing society by the time the commercial estate of Oslo decided to realize its long-lasting idea of instituting academic business instruction, even if Norwegian companies were modest compared to similar organizations in Britain or in France. Yet, towards the latter part of the century, running a business had become increasingly complicated and bureaucratic, even in an economic "backward" country like Norway. One of its new characteristics was the expanding group of salaried employees, who were positioned between the workers and the direction.¹⁶⁶ Another was the growth of various services to facilitate or assist the ongoing modernization.

Still, it was not this group of "intermediates" that the CHF had in mind when it discussed the possibilities of creating a three-year-long business school for men. What concerned them were the businessmen to come, those in charge of the commercial development of the capital.¹⁶⁷ But, like many others who have wanted to create something new, its completion depended on money – and the CHF did not have much money.¹⁶⁸ For this reason the committee established in 1873 to prepare a formal proposal, concluded that "a complete institution of higher learning and conduct [of three years duration]" would be too expensive for businessmen.¹⁶⁹ As an alternative, they suggested launching an initial one-year program. However, the board abruptly rebuffed the suggestion. In the eyes of the majority the question of higher business education was very urgent, not the least in order to secure for "businessmen a comprehensive level of general education".¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Myhre, Jan Eivind (1979): 120, Rudeng, Erik (1999).

¹⁶⁶ Thue, Lars (1979): 141 – 142.

¹⁶⁷ Sandberg, Øystein (red. 1954): 28.

¹⁶⁸ This was in fact somewhat symptomatic for Norwegian entrepreneurs. The capital market of Norway was for a long time relative modest, and many industrialists went abroad for investors. The development of hydroelectric industry in Norway, from the early 1900s, was for instance facilitated by French capital. The bank *Parisbas* provided the loans needed to establish *Norsk Hydro* in 1905 –currently the largest multinational company of Norway, specializing in a wider range of products, from oil to fertilizers.

¹⁶⁹ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 19 Citation in original: "fuldstændig høiere Dannelsesanstalt."

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. *Oprettelsen af en høiere mercantile Læreanstalt her i Byen*, 22. mai 1874 Citation in original: "en mer omfattende Almendannelse for den Næringsdrivende."

During a meeting held on the 6th of October 1874, the CHF decided, therefore, to go against its own council's suggestion and created a two-year program.¹⁷¹ However, the strategy of the old committee of raising funds from amongst the capital's businessmen persisted. So did the plan to apply for authorization from the Oslo municipality. This legal concern was first and foremost motivated by the belief that state recognition would provide the institution with both students and legitimacy. "There have been several efforts to establish private commercial schools in Christiania, but mostly without any result".¹⁷² State approval was, consequently, thought to give major advantages to the project, although the program as such would be founded on the basis of primarily private endowments. The question of governmental authorization had also been raised, but was soon rejected as the men saw no evident connection between business education and the national economy. Commercial or mercantile education, the terms used by the board, was more an issue for the municipalities than the state bureaucracy, as it first of all would influence the development of the towns, and not the country as a whole.

The positive effect of the nation's technical education will be felt all over the country, wherever industry takes roots. The benefit of institutions of commercial learning, in contrast, will only have an indirect effect on the country's overall development, through the expansion of urban centers, which in itself should be a true proof of rising knowledge and intelligence among our commercial estate. It stands to reason that the care for an up-to-date education in the commercial sciences is a matter for the local authorities, not the state.¹⁷³

But, the commercial sciences were not the CHF's only concern.

When reading the proposition made in 1874, and the following debates, it is clear that a business school was found to be needed urgently not only from a vocational point of view. It was, as already indicated, a way to secure for the commercial classes a solid

¹⁷¹ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 29.

¹⁷² Ibid.: 37, *Morgenbladet* (2.12.1874) Citation in original: "Der har været gjort flere Forsøg paa at oprette private Handelsskoler i Christiania, men som oftest med ringe Held."

¹⁷³ Ibid. *Oprettelsen af en høiere mercantile Lærestalt her i Byen*, 22. mai 1874. Citation in original: "De gavnlige følger af Nationens tekniske Oprdagelse ville spores umiddelbart over det hele Land, hvorsomhelst Industrien fæster Rod. Derimot vil Nyttens af de merkantile Lærestalter kun paa en mere indirekte Maade komme Landdistrikterne tilgode gennem Byernes forlgede Velstand og Folkemængde, som bære være det sikre Resultat af vor Handelsstands voxende Intelligens og Dygtighed. Det antages

level of general education. The CHF expressed a specific wish: "...to create an intelligent and knowledgeable commercial class".¹⁷⁴ And it was, in many ways, this point that the first educational commission simply overlooked, when it suggested a one-year program instead of three. Biding their time and creating a shorter course in the meanwhile would, in the words of the general assembly, never enable them to reach this goal. It had, so to speak, to offer a minimum two-years' program, otherwise, the project would have little hope of creating "...a rich social life within the business class".¹⁷⁵ The arguments were, in other words, driven by both economic and social motives.¹⁷⁶

Even if the *embetsmann's* regime started to wane at the time the men of CHF began discussing the issue seriously, this class had managed to establish a norm of higher education that combined utility with ideals of general education. This model of *Bildung* influenced the social and professional strategies of other classes, including the commercial establishment. To raise the banner of business education in the way the commercial communities did hence was a social strategy which had the purpose of achieving cultural legitimacy in line with the standards initially set by the well-educated elite of *embetsmenn* during its heyday (1830s – 1860s). Within Norwegian historical research, this elite has – as in Germany – been denoted the "educated bourgeoisie" (*dannelsesborgerskapet*) as opposed to the economic elite.¹⁷⁷ The pre-history of the country's first business school illustrates that the business communities of Oslo were very conscious of their cultural handicap. Because they had either little or no formal education, they had limited access to the knowledge held by the ruling elite, a situation they wanted to change by creating a higher business school for the future "young people who aim to devote their lives to commerce".¹⁷⁸

derfor, at Ornsorgen for en tidsmssig Undervisning in Handelsvidernskaberne ikke bør være en Statssag, men en Kommunesag."

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. Citation in original: "...at skabe en intelligent og kundskabsrig Handelsstand.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Citation in original: "...et fyldig Samfundsliv inden Handelstanden."

¹⁷⁶ Scholars of Scandinavian business education have paid much less attention to the social and cultural dimensions when interpreting the modern business school's pre-histories and origins. Examples here are Lars Engwall (1992); (1994) and Rolv Petter Amdam (1993); (1998).

¹⁷⁷ In German the divide is between *Bildungsbürgertum* and *Gesellschaftsbürgertum*.

¹⁷⁸ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): *Oprettelsen af en høiere mercantile Lærestalt her i Byen*, 22. mai 1874 Citation in original: "unge Mennesker der agter at opoffre sig for Handelen."

Professional or Social Ambitions?

According to CHF's members, young men entering the service of the state as civil servants, lawyers, pastors or medical doctors were not the only ones in need of a thorough professional training. The future men of commerce also needed it:

It is an erroneous belief that that only young men whose aim it is to use their knowledge and skills in the service of the State, are in need of a higher education. As much as medical doctors, pastors and lawyers are in need of a higher instruction so are future businessmen. Also in this country, we have to make sure that young men, whose professional devotion is to commerce, have access to modern and theoretical training, which without doubt is the best fundament for a businessman's practical lifework.¹⁷⁹

Theoretical learning was, according to these men of commerce, of great importance even for the future businessman. It provided, so to speak, the fundament for his "practical lifework", thus knowledge was looked upon as a key to professional capability. Compared to the logic of social selectivity prized by the Parisian business community, the commercial society of Oslo was evidently more pragmatic or utility oriented. But what type of knowledge did they cherish? Following Haakon Syversen et al, the authors of a book on *Oslo handelsgymnasium* (OHG) written for the occasion of its centenary in 1975, there was a major conflict and debate about precisely this question.¹⁸⁰ According to the written sources, the conflict was on the grounds of principles – vocational themes versus generally educative subjects, and how to find a balance between the two in terms of hours taught.¹⁸¹ Was 3 hours bookkeeping and office work sufficient the first year, or would they require double that? And how many foreign languages should be studied as opposed to accounting?

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. Citation in original: "Det er en Vildfarelse, at kun de unge Mænd, som have til Hensigt at ofre sine Kræfter i Statens Tjeneste, behøve en højere Dannelse....Ligesaa vist som der kræves en Fagvidenskabelig Uddannelse for Læger, Theologer eller Jursiter, forinden de ansees skikkede for den praktiske Udøvelse af sit Kald, ligesaa vist bør der aabnes Adgang for de Ynglinge, som have bestemt sig for Handelen, til her i landet at kunne skaffe sig den tidmesæssige theoretiske Fordannelse, som visseligen er det sikreste Fundament for Kjøbmandens praktiske Gjerning."

¹⁸⁰ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 35 – 35.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

The first draft of business schools' (CHG/OHG) program rested, to a large extent, on the German experience, and more precisely on the commercial schools of Dredzen, Leipzig and Chemnitz. Germany was said to occupy a central position in the organization of both higher and lower business educations in Europe. As said by one its members, Peter W.W. Kildal; "Among all the cultivated people of Europe, Germany has the most important position with respect to the organization of higher and lower education for future businessmen".¹⁸² But the "German experience" was in no way a coherent one, he continued. In fact, it alternated from town to town in terms of both structure and content. The three institutions mentioned were, however, quite similar, and were suited, to a large extent, to what the committee had in mind regarding the new business school of Oslo. Only one reservation was taken on board, and that was the time devoted the teaching of the modern sciences.

In the opinion of the committee, the German schools should to a large extend be used as a models to follow, in so far as they suit the mission of the future business school in Christiania. The institutions mentioned above seem, however, to emphasize the pupils' scientific development to the expenses of their practical skills. A priority of this kind is less appropriate in relation to our school, the aim of which is to provide the pupils with knowledge that would enable them to practice as businessmen as soon as they have passed the final examination.¹⁸³

The essential thing, from the CHF's point of view, was to provide the students with practical and general knowledge. Thus the commission left out most of the scientific disciplines found in the German business schools, arguing that they were not strictly mercantile and should therefore not "steal" hours from the more vocational subjects. While the three German institutions mentioned taught physics, "natural history",

¹⁸² Ibid. *Oprettelsen af en høiere mercantile Lærestalt her i Byen*, 22. mai 1874 Citation in original: "Blandt alle Euopas Kulturfolk intager Tyskland den mest fremragende Plads med Hensyn til Organisationen af den høiere og lavere Undervisning for vordende Kjøbmænd."

¹⁸³ Ibid. *Oprettelsen af en høiere mercantile Lærestalt her i Byen*, 22. mai 1874. Citation in original: "Komiteen er af den Mening, at disse tyske Skoler saavidt mulig bør tages til Forbilleder, men dog med behørigt Hensyn til de Fordringer, som det maa antages, at Almenheden vil opstille til det vordende Handelsinstitut in Christiania. De nysnævnte Lærestalter sees at lægge saamegen Vægt paa Elevenes hovedsagelig videnskabelllige Uddannelse, at der maaske ofres noges mindre Tid paa de rent praktiske Fag, end det tør ansees hensigtsmæssigt for et nyt Institutt, hvis Maals det bør være at bibringe Eleverne saadanne Kundskaber, som gjøre dem brugbare for det praktiske Liv, naar de have bestaaet Afgangsexamen."

mechanical technology, in addition to chemistry and mathematics for as many as 16 hours per week, the CHF arrived at a syllabus where the sciences were given little weight. Chemistry was, for example, taught for only one hour a week in both years, whereas physics was defined as being compulsory for second year students only – one hour per week. This accentuated the vocational interests above the scientific.¹⁸⁴ In their own words, the future business school was to “provide the pupils with knowledge that would enable them to practice as businessmen as soon as they passed the final examination”.¹⁸⁵

Another subject that also underpinned the utilitarian principles’ centrality was the priority given to the so-called spoken languages. According to the first draft of the program, classes in French, English and German were defined as being compulsory, while Spanish and Italian had the status as optional subjects. Among the required tongues, in contrast, German was emphasized the most. As many as 5 hours per week were devoted to the German language in the first year, while it was reduced to 4 hours in the second year. Also here, utility was the key reason for the decision, because German was – as the committee said – “without doubt the most needed commercial language for the Norwegian businessman”.¹⁸⁶ In addition, its grammar had the advantage that it stimulated the pupil’s ability to reason logically – just like Latin; “...a thorough study of the German language presumes to equip the pupils with the ability to reason logically”.¹⁸⁷ The two other languages, English and French, were given 3 hours in both years, although the latter was said to be losing its place to the former as a commercial language. Only within the trade of lumber was French still the ruling tongue, the commission stated. When planning the program, the two languages were, however, weighted equally, which indeed gives one reason to believe that the process of content formation had a more complex cultural-discursive embedding than mere utilitarianism. Apart from the tension

¹⁸⁴ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 24, Table “Undervisningsplaners for Christiania Handelsgymnasium og for tyske handelsskoler.”

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. *Oprettelsen af en høiere mercantile Lærestalt her i Byen*, 22. mai 1874. Citation in original: “at bibringe Eleverne saadanne Kundskaber, som gjøre dem brugbare for det praktiske Liv, naar de have bestaaet Afgangsexamen.”

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. Citation in original: “...Tysk uden Tvivl maa ansees at være det mest nødvendig Forretningsprog for den norske Kjøbemand.”

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. Citation in original: “...et grundigt Studium af det tyske Sprogs Grammatik antages at ville bidrage i fortrinlig Grad til at udvikle Eleverne Evner for logisk Tænkning.”

between vocational versus scientific knowledge, which has already been explained, the principle of utility had its ideological counterpart in an ideal of general education. The notion of French as general educative subject was in fact the reason for making the language compulsory at CHG. According to the internal debate, the French tongue was considered to be an excellent substitute for the Classics, well suited “to provide the pupils with a sense of decorum and general education”.¹⁸⁸ It was without doubt the most cultivated one, the men argued, but for Norwegians it was also known as being “almost impossible to learn if one was not being exposed to it as a child”.¹⁸⁹

Integrating French into the syllabus hence was a way of communicating a generally educative ambition which, from my point of view, illustrates that the Oslo business school as first drafted was a modification of the German “ideal-type”. As well as downplaying the scientific ambition so typical of German education, it also had an eye to the aspect of *culture générale* that characterized especially the move towards higher business education in Paris. Norwegian language and literary history made up, for example, 5 hours per week, while foreign languages accounted for 10. Commercial history and geography were present too, just as in France, whereas the commercial “disciplines”, including national economy, law and shorthand, counted for about 14 hours per week, with stenography as an optional course. Seen in the light of what has already been said about the regional developments in France, *Christiania Handelsgymnasium* (CHG) appeared therefore to be not so “German”. The only subject of the CHG that was not present in the French institutions was national – or political – economy. How can this strong similarity between the two countries be explained?

When working on the program proposal in the spring 1874, the CHF had felt an increasingly need for pedagogical assistance and input. Apart from the training they had undertaken themselves, the members knew little about academic business education. One of Kildal's best friends – and CHG's future director – Christian Larssen, was however relatively well informed about the recent developments within the field. And when he was asked to assist the committee, he agreed. His initial plan was to go to Belgium and Germany in order to learn from their experiences, just as the industrial society of

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. Citation in original: “bibringe Eleverne en høiere Almendannelse.”

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Mulhouse had done about a decade earlier. But, when he returned three-quarter of a year later, it came to light that he had visited some business schools in France too. Which ones is not clear, but the sources tell us that he definitely stayed in Normandy for a period, and therefore most likely visited the newly established *écoles supérieures de commerce* of Rouen and Le Havre.¹⁹⁰ He also made it to Paris, and stayed there for a couple of months. Whether he met up with the Siegfried brothers is, however, unknown, but Haakon Syvertsen et al makes an interesting remark about his stay in Dieppe summer 1874, located only a days' ride from Le Havre, the new home town of the Siegfried family. Although the Parisian elite increasingly frequented this small seaside resort in the late-nineteenth century, it seems to be more than pure coincidences that Larssen decided to visit exactly this town so close on the hometown of the Siegfrieds. Thus, it would be worthwhile to follow up in future research the possible personal contacts between Larssen and the Siegfrieds.

In both countries, foreign models and experiences were vital in the creation of local – and later national – business schools. What countries and “models” they decided to follow differed though, both among towns and countries. In Mulhouse it was the “Belgian” type, while in Oslo the choice fell on the “German” model, although it is important to keep in mind that the various institutions making up these national experiences were, in fact, local and not countrywide. The commercial institute of Antwerp was, as might be remembered, the reference point for the industrial society of Mulhouse when it was planning the town's first business school in the 1860s. And in Oslo it was the public experience of three specific German towns – Dresden, Leipzig and Chemnitz that had the role as “Vorbildungsschulen”. Larssen visited both German and Belgian institutions, in addition to the French ones, on his study trip across Europe. And when he was on his way back to Oslo after being called home by the CHF in March 1875, he stayed in Berlin. The reason for the early call to come home was an executive committee meeting held by the township of Oslo. The municipality had finally given their approval, and the program committee was in need of his expertise.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 75.

¹⁹¹ Myhre, Jan Eivind (1990): 484.

After five weeks work, a final program was ready to be submitted the town's official administration.¹⁹² While Larssen's presence occasioned few changes to the first draft, his study trip was far from wasted. As soon as Larssen was safely at the helm he started moderating the syllabi. Already by the end of first academic year; i.e. 1875/76, he announced major modifications of the classes.¹⁹³ With the help of Carl Polaczek, the school's German-educated lecturer, the teaching was brought to a more realistic level, in the sense that theoretical emphasis was replaced by a "commercial office" of the kind which existed in business schools abroad. When the school moved into its brand new location in Munch's street number 4, in 1885, it hosted a well-equipped office.¹⁹⁴ An additional curricular change initiated by Larssen concerned mathematics. Initially this subject had been given two hours per week, in both years, with the aim of strengthening the students' ability to reason logically and stringently, but few of the boys seemed to like it. Larssen, who held an Arts degree himself thus decided to erase mathematics from the syllabus, arguing that it had been given "far too much weight to begin with".¹⁹⁵

In 1901, typewriting was also made compulsory. After being introduced into the Norwegian army in 1867, this time- and cost-saving American invention had become increasingly more common in administrative offices of both public and private character in Kristiania.¹⁹⁶ But, as we saw in Chapter 3, the field of "fast-writing" was soon to be taken over by female clerks. HEC had, for instance, no "commercial bureau" as it obviously gave the impression that it was vocational, and thus inferior, to the elite school.¹⁹⁷ In Norway, however, practical utility was highly valued even among the elite. The social-discursive embedding of the relationship between theory and practice so characteristic for the Parisian elite, seems thus to have been secondary for those in charge of the CHG. As a matter of fact, the feminization of office work seems to have been far more problematic for the men in charge of the CHG than its highly vocational reputation:

¹⁹² The municipality of Oslo agreed to assist the school financially, as well as by paying the wages of the staff. OHG got by this a status as an official establishment, even though it was financed with the help of private endowments. It accepted moreover students from all over Norway, and thus served more as a national than local business school before other Norwegian towns got similar institutions from 1904 onwards.

¹⁹³ The school received 41 applicants the first year, of which 39 were accepted.

¹⁹⁴ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 56 – 58.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.: 48.

¹⁹⁶ *Kristiania nærings- og forretningsliv. Avdeling I* (1915): 134.

Only two years after the school opened, they decided to create a higher evening course for “mercantile female youth”.

Including Women in Separate Spheres

“As it is known, it has become more and more common to employ women in the world of business...”, CHG wrote to the city council in 1878.¹⁹⁸ And,

it is with a firm belief in a true need for female education in commerce that the administration has arrived at the conclusion to attend to the mercantile female youth, in the same ways as it does in relation to the male, by creating a female evening course, which provides teaching in mercantile subjects and modern languages.¹⁹⁹

The motivation for the statement was Larssen’s novel idea – to establish a one-year evening course for the teaching of the mercantile disciplines, in addition to foreign languages, to young women. The decisive question was if they could count on support from the township with the condition that a minimum of 12 candidates signed up the first year. But, the Oslo municipality, which once had been overly positive to the male business school, took its time to consider the request for support. Unsure whether commercial education for women was to be considered a state responsibility, the municipal council arrived at the conclusion that the course needed 16 applicants or more to receive any communal support.²⁰⁰ The general fear was that the female evening course would become a loss-making business, and that the municipality would have to cover the loss afterwards. But Director Larssen did not give up. By lobbying the capital’s commercial classes as well as its conservative newspaper *Morgenbladet*, he managed to get the 16th girl!²⁰¹ *Morgenbladet*’s editor expressed his strongest support.²⁰² “During the

¹⁹⁷ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.: 51, Letter from OGH’ board to the Christiania Magistrat dated the 11th of November 1878.

Citation in original: “Som bekendt er det i den senere Tid blevet mere og mere almindeligt at anvende Damer i Forretningslivet...”

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Citation in original: “der i Følelsen heraf og med Overbevisning om, at her er et Savn af afhjælpe, at Gymnasiets Bestyrelse har anseet det for riktigt og tidsmæssigt, at Gymnasiet stillede sig det til Opgave at tage sig af den kvindelige merkantile Ungdom, saaledes som det gjør ved den mandlige, ved Oprettelsen af et kvindeligt Eftermiddagskursus med Undervisning i merkantile Fag og Sprog.”

²⁰⁰ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 50 – 52.

²⁰¹ NB: *Morgenbladet* (29.11.1878); (11.01.1879).

²⁰² NB: *Morgenbladet* (29.11.1878).

two last decades, the working habits of women from the so-called well-equipped homes has changed dramatically”, the editor wrote.²⁰³ Simultaneously, he reminded the readers that the entrance of women into the commercial sphere, in offices and behind the businessman’s counter, was a recent trend. It was accordingly important to be a bit understanding. His recommendation was hence to launch this female course despite the feeble response in the first year. The girls and their families would soon discover the large potential of this program, he confirmed.

When looking at the proposition handed over to the city council on the 11th of November 1878, there is a striking gender discourse at use. In addition to an increasing need or demand for skilled female labor in the capital, the main *raison d’être* for starting up a higher commercial program for young girls was the so-called female “nature”. There was little doubt – the board wrote – that the female nature – compared to the male – went well with certain occupations of the new business life.²⁰⁴ To be honest, women had a personality that enabled them to perform as a bookkeeper or as a teller in shops even better than men did. They continued as follows:

Such a monotonous, almost machine-like work, as a bookkeeper or a cashier in a smaller retail shop, seems to be more suitable for the woman, who has such an elastic spirit that she can even turn into a living machine, than for the man, who has usually the talent for independence and initiative. Women’s simple way of living also makes them more destined for this kind of work, which is of such a character that it does not pay much or raise temptations for weak characters.²⁰⁵

This last citation is very rich indeed. It displays the gender stereotypes so characteristic of bourgeois society and culture, like the *active* man and the more *passive* woman: a woman was considered to be a good cashier because of her character. By being humble, passive

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 51. Letter from OHG’s board to the Christiania Magistrat dated the 11th of November 1878 Citation in original: “..naar Hensyn tages til det kvindelige Naturel i Sammenligning med det mandlige, synes det neppe at kunne være Tvivl underkastet, at der ogsaa i det praktiske Forretningsliv gives Beskjæftigelser, der passer ligesaa godt, om ikke bedre, for Kvinden end for Manden.”

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Citation in original: “Saadant ensformigt, tilsids næsten maskinsmæssigt Arbejde som en Bogholders eller Kasserers ved mindre og Detail-Forretning synes at ligge vel saa godt for Kvinden, der har en for elastisk Aand til at kunne svinde ind til en levende Maskine, som for Manden, der dog altid mere eller mindre er anlagt for Selvstændighed og Initiativ. Ogsaa Kvindens tarverligere Levemaade og færre Fordringer i det hele gjør hende vel skikket til at overtage saadant Arbejde, der er af den Beskaffenhed, at det enten ikke kan betales høit eller medføre Fristelser for svage Karakterer.”

and adaptable she was particularly suited for working in smaller shops and retail stores, while a man – having a natural capacity for independence and initiative – would head for something better and higher. A different example, also based on prevailing ideas of manhood and womanhood, is the argument that women, because of their sex, are cheaper to employ than men. Female labor is thus especially attractive for businessmen who run “smaller shops and retail stores”.²⁰⁶ Of course, the lesson to be learned from this was that hiring middle-class women to certain lower jobs was wise – and sometimes the wisest – solution. In sum they were thought of as being both economical and efficient because of their ability to “dwindle into a living machine”.²⁰⁷

But, there were more than economic motives triggering this sudden interest in the education of women.

From the 1860s and onwards, many educational revisions were introduced in Norway underpinning the principle of equal rights, or access to education regardless class and gender. Of course, social distinctions were not erased at once. In order to give an illustration of how elitist the Norwegian *gymnasium* was in these years, it is worth mentioning that it held only 370 male pupils in total the academic year 1875/76, whereas *middelskolen*, on the other hand, had 3,600 in total.²⁰⁸ In the years to come, formal mechanisms of exclusion were, however, removed gradually. One of the first steps, besides the introduction of *middelskolen*, was the equalization of the classicist and the realist “track” in the Norwegian gymnasium the same year; i.e. 1869.²⁰⁹ This moved Latin, Greek and ancient history from the center to the periphery in the country’s knowledge regime, making it professionally relevant for social groups other than the bureaucratic elite. But this novel system gave priority not only to utility and equality, but also to national identity. Scientific and more practical knowledge was thus paired with the teaching of Norwegian language, literature and history. The new dominant perspective celebrated education and refinement through history and national consciousness, not philosophy and “ancient knowledge”, which once had been the key to

²⁰⁶ Ibid. Citation in original: “mindre og Detail-Forretning.”

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Strømberg, Erling (1984): 36.

²⁰⁹ This was a natural consequence of the introduction of the *middelskolen*, which introduced a realist syllabus.

the accumulation of cultural capital.²¹⁰ Still, Norway was not the only country to make its educational system more national and democratic in these years.

As we remember, the French system underwent similar changes in the 1880s, at least with respect to primary education. Jules Ferry's reforms in 1881 and 1882 underlined primary education as a governmental responsibility and as a universal right, regardless of sex, social origins and religion. In Norway, the symbolical effect of public unitary education was nonetheless stronger than in many other countries, due to the fact that the country had been under foreign rule for more than 400 years. The new educational system was a mode of identity formation, according to Rune Slagstad. Over time, it had a strong national integrative function, and was used as a lever towards social integration and equality among people.²¹¹ Likewise, this democratically-minded project encompassed for a long time only elementary education, just as in France, as one needed to pay in order to attend both lower and upper-secondary education. Furthermore, the exam needed in order to enter the Norwegian gymnasium remained a male privilege until 1878. Nation building, which coincided with, as much as it was facilitated by, the breakthrough of a democratic civil society, was for this reason a highly male and masculine affair. Even though the female sex was given a symbolic function through the national rhetoric rich of romantic feminine values, few women participated as active subjects in this process by defining or defending women's right to education. The many lower-secondary girls' schools, which mushroomed in the urban centers the second half of the 1800 did not qualify for further studies. Compared to the old *borgerskolene* and *realskolene*, the female versions educated the girls in accordance with bourgeois values, such as the domesticated woman, gender complementarity and separate-spheres ideology. Pedagogically, this meant that they emphasized the so-called female subjects, such as the spoken languages, art and music, and general conduct and culture, in addition to reading, writing and accounting.²¹² The basic idea was to provide the girls with the kind of general culture found to be vital for women of the bourgeoisie.²¹³

²¹⁰ Slagstad, Rune (2000): 41.

²¹¹ Telhaug, Alfred Oftedal & Odd Asbjørn Mediås (2003): 111 – 113.

²¹² Boyesen, Einar et al (1924).

²¹³ Hagemenn, Gro (1999): 199.

The most known of the Norwegian girls' schools carried the name of its owner, Hartvig Nissen, and was located in the capital. Mr. Nissen was an eager school reformer who wanted to create a more specialized and planned education, wherein the natural sciences were, to a larger extent, integrated into the established body of classical knowledge.²¹⁴ "People's education" was Nissen's major slogan and project, a project he shared with a wide circle of reform minded *embetsmenn*. His own school recruited, on the contrary, pupils from the so-called well-equipped homes. The young girls were initially daughters of *embetsmenn*. The instruction his school provided was nonetheless of great importance in enabling in particular unmarried upper and middle class women to make a living on their own. Although the bureaucratic elite was rich in social and cultural capital, they could seldom provide for their unmarried daughters in the same way as successful businessmen could. Single women of such families were therefore often in the need of "suitable" work. This made the girls' schools crucial even in professional terms, in spite of their rather "unproductive" syllabus. In fact, many female teachers and public functionaries in the latter part of the nineteenth century were graduates of the girls' schools.²¹⁵

The emerging class of female white-collar workers was therefore drawn from the upper social classes. From what Erling Strømberg has written on the recruitment of functionaries to the telegraphic sector in the 1870s, 2/3 of the women belonged to the upper social class of *embetsmenn*, larger businessmen and lower public servants, while only 1/3 of the men did.²¹⁶ Socially speaking, the new class of functionaries was therefore a mixed group of people that happened to enter the modern office for very different reasons. Among men from the lower classes, office work was a means towards social mobility. But for the unmarried upper-class women, it was rather a question of social degradation. As long as the ideal of the bourgeois family reigned with their dreams and ideals, office work was considered to be secondary to the roles of wife and mother. It was, so to speak always, a second solution for women, a fact that in one way can be said to have reinforced rather than challenged the force of the separate sphere ideology.

²¹⁴ Slagstad, Rune (1998): 16.

²¹⁵ Hagemann, Gro (1999): 197 – 202, Skaarer, Aase Camilla (1997).

²¹⁶ Strømberg, Erling (1984): 38.

After 1878, many of the upper-class girls also began preparing the “middle-school” exam.²¹⁷ Of course, this represented a potential threat to the professional project of the CHF, simply because the requirement for admission to CHG was the very same exam. Though, as we have seen, Director Larssen knew how to handle it. By launching a separate program for women in January 1879, accepting applicants who had either passed the final examinations held by the “middle-schools” or the girls’ schools, or showed an equivalent level through an exam, CHG managed to secure or protect its maleness for many more years.²¹⁸ Unlike the boys, who were defined as the school’s official body of pupils, the girls attended school after dinner, between 4 and 7 p.m., six days a week. Practically speaking, this made the female commercial course more or less half the size of the male one in terms of hours taught weekly. Its program was, furthermore, one year shorter than male business school, and did not follow the academic year but ran from January to December, which indeed indicates that the female course was considered more vocational than the male one. If we compare the content of the two programs, we can easily see that the female course was a considerable simplification of the male curriculum. While the boys read a variety of general educative subjects including history, geography and political economy, the girls studied only the commercial “sciences”, in combination with lessons in Norwegian and foreign languages, like German and English. While French language was defined as being compulsory for the boys, it was only optional for the girls.²¹⁹

It is reasonable to conclude that the two-sex model, which evolved from the late 1870s onwards in Oslo, had more than merely economic or vocational explanations to it. As important, I would argue, was the structuring authority or power that gender provided. For an educational newcomer like OHG, operating in a milieu increasingly shared by both sexes, maintaining a professional distinction between men and women was absolutely critical. It should not be seen as a coincidence that the proposal to establish a

²¹⁷ The first girl to pass the “middle-school” exam in Norway was Charlotte Lund from Stavanger. After being granted authorization to do so in 1875, three years before all women got the same right, she applied for admission to the internal training program of the Government Service of Telegraph (Erling Strømberg 1984: 33).

²¹⁸ OHG later created a preparatory course for those girls lacking the required exams. These preparation classes lasted for 4 months, and commenced normally on the 1st of September (*Morgenbladet* 02.09.1900: 3).

female commercial course arrived in 1878. The Norwegian educational system underwent major transformations between 1860 and 1900. Women's right to pass the "middle-school" was among the endorsed changes, with a reduced course load in mathematics.²²⁰ Before 1878 this degree had been a male privilege, which secured for CHG a male clientele. The two-sex model develops therefore in a time when the established school system is being depleted of its gender distinctions, whereas the formation of the professional businessman seemed to have relied on it. Eighteen years later, another educational law complemented the act of 1878.²²¹ By stressing the principle of equality, the 1896 law introduced coeducation and gender equality as the ruling norm in secondary education. As a consequence, it was no longer possible to establish specific girls' schools, "and all higher common schools with public support were called to give attention to the fact that young girls had the same right as boys to be given access".²²² This law arrived as part of a larger reform, which for one thing reduced the role of the Classics utterly by creating a two-track system consisting of a "realist" specialization and another in the modern languages.²²³ This defined the classical subjects as being "dead" in Norway, while it was still alive in other countries, such as France. As we saw in Chapter 3, a system of knowledge based on the classics barred for a long time French women from the educational system of men, whereas the first step towards full inclusion of women in Norwegian upper-secondary education was taken in 1878. This historical fact makes Norway a gender-equality forerunner compared to France. In the following, we shall further investigate the role of organized feminism in this advancement, in order to see the extent to which it increased women's possibilities within previously male dominated sectors and professions.

²¹⁹ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 53, 157.

²²⁰ Blom, Ida (1995): 21.

²²¹ Lov om høiere Almenskoler 1896.

²²² Hagemann, Gro (1999): 200.

²²³ The second option got later the nickname "the girls' track", due to the fact that it recruited fairly more girls than the "realist" track".



The Feminist Stand towards Coeducation and Common Syllabus for Boys and Girls

In Norway, as in France, women's access to the university and to the examination that qualified one for higher studies arrived long before they were permitted to enter upper-secondary education.²²⁴ In Norway, women got the formal right to pass the *Examen-Artium* (Ex-A) in 1882, but as long as they were excluded from the schools providing the needed preparation, very few took advantage of the possibility this right contained. For sure, some families arranged for private tutoring of their daughters, as in Paris, or enrolled them in specific girls' schools to prepare the Ex-A. Ragna Nielsen, a full-blooded Oslo feminist, started one of them in 1885, but unlike most others, which accepted only female pupils, she welcomed beginners from both sexes. From Nielsen's point of view, coeducation and common curriculum were questions of justice, and the only solution in order to bring further understanding and equality between the sexes.²²⁵ Actually, this stand communicated through a gender language of equality, sameness, and justice, was also the winning one in relation to the reform of the Norwegian school system. The law of 1896 followed in many ways Nielsen's example by making gender equality the official norm. The feminist organizations, on the other hand, acted in a cowardly fashion.²²⁶ Women's role or their place within the emerging "national-democratic" system of primary education, which Slagstad argues had such a national integrative function, was, in any case, highly restricted.²²⁷ It was primarily women's function as teachers that concerned the progressive political elite of the 1890s.

Unlike the question of the right to enter the university and the teacher colleges, women's permission to enter the "higher schools", i.e. lower and upper secondary education, was a hotly debated issue in Norway.²²⁸ The governmental committee, established in the 1890s, to look into the question of upper female education, suffered from early on from internal conflicts and disagreements. While a few were in support of

²²⁴ Norwegian women got the right to study at the university in 1884, the same year as the principle of parliamentary governance was made the definitive political practice and the *embetsmann's* regime collapsed. Six year later, they also got the right to sign up for the teachers colleges 1890.

²²⁵ Moksnes, Aslaug (1984): 63 – 65.

²²⁶ Ibid.: 62.

²²⁷ Ibid.: 62.

coeducation and gender equality in terms of teaching and examination, the majority wanted to develop the established system of female education, i.e. the girls' schools, further.²²⁹ There was, so to speak, no contradiction between endorsing a unitary system of primary education, on the one hand, and maintaining a sex-segregated secondary system, on the other, which in practice meant teaching boys and girls separately and in accordance to different syllabi. The committee's male members were not the only ones to endorse a language of gender complementarity as opposed to equality – or sameness. Also within the growing feminist community, which attracted bourgeois women and some men, the principle of "difference" was eagerly promoted.²³⁰ The Norwegian Feminist Organization (*Norsk Kvinnesaksforening* – NKF), Norway's first feminist organization established in 1884, and for a while led by Miss Nielsen, never managed to come up any official resolution on the issue of female education. Fearing that the question would have the same divisive or disintegrative effect as the issue of women's right to vote, NKF avoided – or postponed – the issue more or less consciously until the question lost its rousing effects.²³¹

Its local office in Bergen was at first strongly in favor of a sex-segregated system of secondary education. In their opinion, young girls should be educated in accordance with their physical and intellectual qualities, and their social roles as future mothers and wives. The Oslo division, in contrast, had the tendency to speak the language of equality.²³² Strongly influenced by more radical feminists as Gina Krog and Ragna Nielsen, many Oslo-feminists thus wanted to remove the gender barriers and introduce coeducation. But there existed also a more moderate line in the capital that argued for the need of taking women's difference into account, defining it as essential in order to facilitate unmarried women to make a living.²³³ In a society with a surplus of women,

²²⁸ Hagemann, Gro (1990): 198.

²²⁹ Hagemann, Gro (1999), *Association des amis de Sèvres* (1997), Meyer, Françoise (1977).

²³⁰ Moksnes, Alsaug (1984): 66 – 69.

²³¹ NKF was divided in two in 1885 on the issue of female suffrage. The new organization, claiming the female suffrage, was called The Society for the Female Vote (1885).

The new organization, claiming the right to vote for women, was called *Kvindestemmeretsforeningen* (KSF) and led by Gina Krogh.

²³² Moksnes, Alsaug (1984): 66 – 67.

²³³ To be sure, such a picture is a large simplification, since the language of "equality" and "difference" coexisted in the sense that both radical and moderate organizations and individuals promoting women's rights at this time used the two languages simultaneously. On the other hand, the distinction seems to have

expanding women's working possibilities were therefore essential from many feminists' point of view, although it also meant celebrating women's complementarity and not equality with men. From the latter part of the 1880s, when the moderate yet practical-minded feminist Anna Bugge replaced Nielsen as NKF's leader, theoretical discussions were increasingly left behind to the advantage of more practical enterprises.

Bugge spoke in particular for women of the lower classes, and saw the immediate need for improving women's positions in the craft and trade industries.²³⁴ The key to this, according to Bugge, was vocational education for women, and by lobbying male politicians she tried to facilitate the access of girls into lower technical education. When Nielsen returned as head of the organization in the period 1889 to 1895 this strategy was in many ways sustained. The organization made several advancements in female education, but most of them underlined the domesticated woman to a larger extent than the professional. NKS's female school of home economics, established in 1900, aimed for instance at educating future housewives, while simultaneously enabling those of the lower classes to work as maids and seamstresses if they remained unmarried.²³⁵

NKF's work for female syndicalism was, on the whole, more progressive than their initiatives within education. The country's first female trade union, which organized women who worked in the production of matches, was a direct result of NKF's work. So was the Female Commercial Society of Kristiania, (FCSK), founded in 1890, and which had approximately 200 members to begin with. The idea of organizing those working in shops and office, originated with Ragna Nielsen, who argued for "the power of standing together as a group".²³⁶ The society's first elected president was Miss Anna Mosvig, a self-made businesswoman from the eastern part of the city.²³⁷ From the little that has been written about her, she seems to have been a remarkable woman. She was the first

marked international feminism as well as domestic political arenas at this time, making the dichotomies radical – moderate, and equality – difference something more than a simple generalization. See Bonnie Smith (1989), Dorothy McBride Stetson (1987), Ida Blom (1994).

²³⁴ Moksnes, Alsang (1984): 145 – 146.

²³⁵ Ibid.: (1984): 164 – 165, 224 – 226.

²³⁶ Ibid.: Citation in original: "hvilen makt der ligger i, at en stand holder sammen, og hvor meget flere kan utrette der, hvor enkelte staar aldeles maktesløse."

²³⁷ Bugge-Hansen, Sirgid (1914): 238

elected female representative on the educational board of Oslo, after women with a minimum income got the right to vote in local elections in 1901.²³⁸

Still, political debates over the rights of women were never restricted to the battleground of principles and practices only, or to feminist organizations for that sake. More than anything, it was a question of political tactics, shaped by its defenders and enemies within the political bodies of Parliament and parties. At times this produced highly surprising outcomes. The Conservative Party (*Høyre*) made, for instance, a remarkable U-turn when the issue of female suffrage was to be voted on in early 1900.²³⁹ Usually, *Høyre* conveyed a rather traditional attitude towards women, seeing no reason why they should be granted the right to vote when the question of female vote broke into the parliamentary debate in the late 1890s. But when the Social-Democratic Party entered Parliament in 1903, the conservatives changed their tactic and started promoting class-based suffrage for women in the hope that it would help them to keep the so-called “socialist threat” at bay. To explain the surprising result of the ballot concerning women’s access to institutions of higher learning is, in contrast, more complicated. The political debates held beforehand give, for example, no concrete indications as to why opinions suddenly changed during the voting proceedings, or why the recommendation prepared by the governmental committee was not taken into account.²⁴⁰ Following Gro Hagemann, the new educational law passed by the Parliament in 1896, never mentioned female education explicitly, but the principles of both coeducation and gender equality in terms of teaching were soon underscored via departmental circulars. How should this sudden change of course be understood or explained historically?

Apart from the political tradeoff that apparently took place during the final voting on this new decree, Norwegian society had also experienced a demographic surplus of women towards the end of the nineteenth century, which made many men positive to legal changes that would improve unmarried women’s capacity to work and make a living.²⁴¹ In Oslo, there were 139 women per 100 men in the 20 to 30 years-old age group

²³⁸ Blom, Ida (1992), Melby, Kari (1999): 240. The female suffrage was complete in 1913.

²³⁹ Kaartveit, Alf (1984), Larsen, Eirinn (1991).

²⁴⁰ Hagemann, Gro (1999): 200.

²⁴¹ Melby, Kari (1999): 233. A comparison of the unmarried population in Europe around 1900, done by J. Hajnal (1965): “European Marriage Patterns in Perspective”, in *Population in History. Essays in Historical*

in 1890.²⁴² In a society characterized by a major shortage of young men, middle-class fathers had to look for other ways to provide for their daughters than through marriage. Women's access to institutions of higher learning was consequently important, both from an economic and a social point of view, and one can easily imagine that the male members of parliament responded to this need, simply because it concerned women of their own class, and thus themselves. Hagemann furthermore argues that the economic crises of the 1870s, and especially the famous "Christiania recession" of 1875, increased women's possibilities within previously male dominated sectors and professions, as they were far cheaper to employ and largely more flexible than men were.²⁴³ Many branches of the urban economy hence experienced an emerging feminization in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. A look at the advertisement columns of *Morgenbladet* shows, for instance, that there was a considerable need for female office personnel in the capital around 1900.²⁴⁴ One of the adverts, posted by Moss Joint-Stock Mill, went as follows:

A woman familiar with general office work, and who has been trained in typewriting and stenography, can be engaged at our office. Some knowledge in German and English is required. Pay in accordance with qualifications.²⁴⁵

The women in demand were those trained in foreign languages and practical office work. Feminists like Bugge and Nielsen were therefore completely right when they argued that vocational education was as important for women as access to the higher theoretical

Demography and referred to by B. Smith (1989): 343, shows that the percentage of single women out of the total population was higher in Norway at the turn of last century than in France. In the age group 20 – 24, 58 % of the French women were single against 77% in Norway, in the age group 25 – 29, 30% in France against 48% in Norway, and between 45 and 49 years old, 12% in France and 18% in Norway.

²⁴² Myhre, Jan Eivind (1990): 398.

²⁴³ Hagemann, Gro (1994): 54. Hagemann argues, moreover, that this fact about the labor market situation in Oslo after 1875 goes against the traditional argument about women being a labor resource or reservoir that is being mobilized when the economy is booming, but demobilized when the recession comes. Consequently, the relationship between economic development and cycles, and gender seems to be much more complex than historians so far has argued.

²⁴⁴ NB: *Morgenbladet* (1900).

²⁴⁵ NB: *Morgenbladet* (09.09.1900): 3 Citation in original: "En kontorvant Dame der kan benytte Skrivemaskine og er øvet i Hurtigskrift kan faa Ansættelse ved vort Kontor. Lidt kjenskap til Tysk og Engelsk fordres. Løn etter Kvalifikationer."

schools. The changing demands for – as well as supply of – cheap labor in the latter part of the century hence indicate an alternative explanation to the liberal school law of 1896.

A third, and more pessimistic, account relates, however, to the fact that the decree had, for a long time, few practical implications. Although the right to have access to institutions of higher learning was equally distributed between the sexes, a woman with the qualifications of a man would still be considered second in the work place, as in society at large. Giving women equal rights to institutions of higher learning represented, therefore, no direct threat to men's hegemony, either in work or in education. A parallel here is the right to apply for higher university studies, which was granted to Norwegian women in 1884. As stressed by Ida Blom, formal gender equality signified something far from equality in practice. Many of the faculties refused moreover to go along with the legal changes imposed by Parliament, and women were for a long time prevented from entering the kind of positions and university studies that they were qualified for.²⁴⁶ For institutions of higher learning, this was of course different, since they did not meet the requirements of a specific type of work, but only further professional and/or academic training. My point is still that women's inclusion in the upper secondary fields never challenged the male norm and hegemony within either work or education. Put differently, legal achievements gave no guarantees for changes in the field of practice.²⁴⁷

Although the 1896 law had made it clear that "civic *middelskoler* and higher Common Schools receiving public support" could no longer establish separate classes for girls, the privately-owned girls' schools carried on for many more years.²⁴⁸ Nor did the law have any impact on the many vocational schools for girls. *Otto Treiders Handelskole* opened in 1900, a school that in fact had had elementary commercial education as its main activity since 1882.²⁴⁹ But also the Oslo Female College of Arts and Crafts, established in 1875, persisted.²⁵⁰ And in 1899, the municipality of Bergen established a

²⁴⁶ Blom, Ida (1995): 19. The Faculties of Art and Science were the first to accept women. The right to work in accordance with formal qualifications was however granted much later (1919 and later).

²⁴⁷ The number of female and male students reached the same level in 1984, thus nearly one hundred years after gender equality was made a guiding principle in institutions of elementary as well as higher education.

²⁴⁸ Hagemann, Gro (1999): 200, Kjelstadli, Knut (1990): 322 – 223.

²⁴⁹ NB: *Morgenbladet* (21.08.1900): 3, *Otto Treiders handelsskole gjennom 50 år, 1882 – 1932* (1932).

²⁵⁰ NB: *Morgenbladet* "Den Kvindelige Industriskole i Christiania 25 Aar" (01.09.1900): 2, *Den Kvinnelige Industriskole i Oslo* (1925). The Oslo Female College for Arts and Crafts changed name in 1902, when it became the Public Female College for Arts and Crafts – a name it kept until 1966.

similar school with the aid of the state, in order to “endow young girls with the understanding for and skills in industrial and female craft-like activities, with a view to the use of them for the pleasure of the home”.²⁵¹ Also this example proves that the law of 1896 encompassed institutions providing theoretical or general education, not professional. The craft colleges that initially prepared its pupils in various skills like sewing and dressmaking, weaving, coloring, embroidery, and drawing were working as female institutions until the mid 1960s.²⁵² The oldest of them, located in Oslo, introduced coeducation as late as in 1966, when it was reorganized as the State Teachers’ College of Arts and Crafts.²⁵³

For a school like CHG, which combined the vocational with the theoretical, the 1896 law had therefore minor practical implications. As a matter of fact, the two-sex model was more or less unaffected by the legal changes. The only amendment was the degree to which the exclusionary practices were outspoken or not.

From Explicit to Implicit Exclusion of Women

Although the business school in the Norwegian capital received public support for both of its programs in the late 1890s, it showed no sign of acting in accordance with the law of 1896. An appeal to open the male course to young girls arrived in fact two years afterwards, but neither the school’s staff nor its students provided the backing needed to change the admission rules. Moreover, Carl Polaczek, who had replaced Larssen in 1897 as the school’s formal director, stood firm on the practice of single-sex education.²⁵⁴ Austria-born Polaczek was a practicing Catholic, and accordingly had difficulties in accepting the idea of placing boys and girls side by side in the same classroom.²⁵⁵ In his opinion, the girls did not need two years of training. The commercial high school continued therefore to keep female applicants out for another five years, until the school board prepared yet another plea in 1901. It took, however, an additional two years of

²⁵¹ Bergens kommunale kvinnelige industriskole (1951): *Gennem 50 år 1899 – 1949*: 3 Citation in original: “til formaal at bibringe unge piger den for selverhverv fornødne indsigt og færdighed i industri og kvindelig husflidsvirksomhet, med særligt hensyn paa hvad der tjener hjemmet til nytte og hygge.”

²⁵² NB: *Morgenbladet* (11.09.1900): 3, Hougén, Johanne (1914): 216 – 220.

²⁵³ Its Norwegian title is *Statens lærerskole i forming* (1966).

²⁵⁴ Syversten, Haakon et al (1975): 65, Bugge-Hansen, Sigrid (1914): 222.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: 222.

discussion before the school decided to introduce coeducation. Female applicants were welcomed for the first time for the academic year 1904/05. "Even so, the right was not much used the first 20 years", Haakon Syversten et al wrote in 1975. This is indeed an interesting fact when it is borne in mind that there was a strong demand for female office functionaries in the capital these years.²⁵⁶ According to a survey made by the Central Bureau of Statistic, women represented almost 50% of the white-collar workers registered in the capital in 1910.²⁵⁷ The same year, the girls counted for only 2 out of the 205 pupils who were selected for admission at the CHG.

The most obvious reason for the lack of female applicants for the men's two-year program was the fact that the introduction of coeducation had no practical impact on the organization of the female evening course. In simple terms, the women's program persisted, accepting girls only, while the day course practiced coeducation. Graduates of the female course had, furthermore, few problems finding employment, thus proving Polaczek's statement. Despite a pretty troublesome beginning, the "commercial evening course for female youth" soon turned into a prodigious success. Less than ten years after the official start of the higher evening course for "mercantile female youth", CHG was running two parallel female classes simultaneously. In 1897 the number had grown to three, and when the school celebrated its 25th anniversary, in 1900, it had received or educated almost as many girls as boys.²⁵⁸ 1,248 young men and 1,169 girls had undertaken professional training at OHG since it started in 1875 and 1879. In an article for *Morgenbladet*, the director Polaczek wrote that "it [had] been a true pleasure to teach the ladies and see how well they have turned out in life"²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, none of the girls were invited to the celebration of the anniversary at the end of August. According to the conservative press, the celebration started at the Freemasons' lodge, in the square of Count Wedel, on the 27th of August. The following day the Mercantile Club gave a banquet at Holmenkollen, a fashionable tourist hotel near Oslo, with zoomorphic

²⁵⁶ Ibid.: 223, Syvertsen, Haakon et al: (1975): 65. See Appendix 8, Table I & IV.

²⁵⁷ Referred to in Sigrid Bugge-Hansen (1914): 226 – 229.

²⁵⁸ NB: *Morgenbladet* (25.08.1900): 2.

²⁵⁹ NB: *Morgenbladet* (27.08.1900): 1; (27.08.1900): 1. In terms of certified graduates, on the other hand, the tables were turned. 989 of the female candidates had undertaken the final examination, while only 951 of the male candidates had done the same. Citation in original: "Det har vært en Glede at undervise Damerne og se, hvor godt de har artet seg i Livet."

ornamentation such as that found on Norwegian stave churches and Viking ships from the Middle Ages.²⁶⁰ However, no women was present, and only men dressed up for supper. What was the reason for this exclusion?

When the Mercantile Club had commenced discussing the forthcoming anniversary earlier that year, one of its members had in fact raised the question of whether the women graduates were to be included in the celebration.²⁶¹ It seems as if the main reason for this was the amusement and joy it would bring, but one should not rule out that there also was a general expectation that the celebration concerned all former pupils, female pupils included. The suggestion to include the female graduates created so much fuss that the society's formal board, assisted by both Christian Larssen and Carl Polaczek, had to intervene. After a long and difficult discussion the board concluded that "they [the women] were definitely going to be kept out on both days".²⁶² The official reason for the exclusion was for motives of "chastity" or "virtue". The festivities would involve both long days and nights, and it would be improper to have women around. The Mercantile Club was, moreover, an all-male society for CHG's male graduates. Women could for this reason not apply for membership, even though they had graduated from the very same school.²⁶³

Its "younger" counterpart, *Merkur*, which brought together male pupils who had attended the school, had similar rules. Since its start in 1877, this fraternity had been exclusively male, and was of great importance in reproducing the so-called bourgeois male ethos. Given the member's age and position, as young pupils, the activities and members of *Merkur* were, however, closely watched – and controlled – by the school's administration. Director Polaczek had an unambiguous educational effect on many of the young boys, and the statute of CHG shows that the pupils were defined as the school's

²⁶⁰ NB: *Morgenbladet* (24.08.1900): 3. *Den Merkantile Klub* was its Norwegian name, established in 1894 on the request of former students of OHG's male day-course (*Den Merkantile Klub 1894 – 1944*, 1944: "Love for udexaminerende handelsgymnasiasters forening 1894": 211). Highly influenced by the national "awakening", this architectural style developed from the 1850s in Norway. And Holmekollen Tourist Hotel was, so to speak, the epoch's crown jewel.

²⁶¹ *Den Merkantile Klub 1894 – 1944* (1944): 33.

²⁶² *Ibid.*: Citation in original: "de aldeles ikke burde gives Adgang, verken den ene eller den anden Dag", Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 68.

²⁶³ *Den Merkantile Klub 1894 – 1944*, 1944: "Love for udexaminerende handelsgymnasiasters forening 1894": 211

responsibility regardless of where they were.²⁶⁴ The implication of this was that the boys, even when they were out walking, or attending other activities, had to behave in accordance with the ideals of the school. One of the requirements was proper clothing. The beginners were, for instance, not allowed to attend school or the meetings in *Merkur* with a walking stick. It seems as if the main reason for this was to prevent young fellows from “showing off at the stock exchange. Elegantly dressed and equipped with a walking stick, the young mingled with businessmen and shareholders”²⁶⁵

Female candidates were subjected to similar rules. The only difference was the content of them. The few sources available for this encounter show, for instance, that a teacher once reported to the school director of a “girl’s hair being unevenly divided”.²⁶⁶ This little piece is, in my opinion, quite rich in the sense that it tell us something about CGH’s emphasis on discipline and order, as well as bourgeois values. Diligence and external appearance was, in other words, highly valued, because it served as key reference point to a person’s social standing. But as young girls between the age of 15 and 17 are largely more mature than boys at the same age, we tend to know far less about the behavior of the female pupils than the male.²⁶⁷ Interestingly, Polaczek made a similar remark in 1914, when being interviewed and quoted in a book with the bold title *Norwegian women*.²⁶⁸ As he was describing his long-lasting fear or refusal to go along with the demand for coeducation, the director happened to admit that, “the more accountable and mature girls have had a positive influence on the childish boys”.²⁶⁹ This must have meant that the introduction of coeducation had been a positive experience after all. He explains his changing attitude towards coeducation by the fact that “girls up North are so much calmer than down South, because when I talk about this practice to

²⁶⁴ Syvrtsen, Haakon et al (1975): 108 – 109, 112.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.: 109 Citation in original: “å sprade på Børsen. I elegant antrekk og utstyrt med spaserstokk blandet de seg med forretningsmenn og aksjeeiere.”

²⁶⁶ Ibid.: 110, *Det ett-årige eftermiddagskursus for kvinner gjennom 50 år* (1928).

²⁶⁷ *Den Merkantil Klub 1894 – 1944* (1944): 154 – 155.

²⁶⁸ The part on women in trade and commerce is written by Sigrid Bugge-Hansen (1914): 221 – 246.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.: 222 – 223. Citation in original: “de litt ældre piker tvertimot øvet en forædlende indflydelse paa de delvis næsten ikke voksne gutter.”

colleagues abroad, they all declare that coeducation would be simply impossible in their schools".²⁷⁰

But despite a changing attitude towards the principle of coeducation, there is little evidence of a change of gender policy at CHG after girls were granted the right to apply for admission to the school's "upper division". From the perspective of the director, it would be best if the girls didn't make use of the higher level, as they would get the same economic benefits from the one-year program. The sexes had, besides, different habits. He continued:

After graduation, women tend to stay in the country, while men have to go abroad in order to perfect their language skills and learn about foreign trade. Women look therefore at a business education as something preliminary, as they tend to leave the commercial sphere completely if they get married or continue as their husbands' assistant.²⁷¹

Polaczek saw no needs to treat men and women identically, simply because they themselves acted so differently. Consequently, as long as he was at the helm, there was little intermingling between the sexes. The female pupils continued, for example, to be excluded from holding membership in *Merkur* until the year he left his post – in 1920. As a matter of fact, the only chance for a girl to enter the club's premises was on Saturdays – for the parties, but there was nothing to indicate that these ladies were the same as those attending the school.²⁷² This shows that the commercial middle-class of Oslo personified a very conservative gender culture, despite the many legal changes undertaken to the advantage of women in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Norway was, for instance, one of the first countries in the world to provide women with full citizenship in 1913, i.e. political rights equal to men's, an incident that has been used as a proof of

²⁷⁰ Ibid.: 222 – 223 Citation in original: "gemytterne er saa meget roligere under vore breddegrater, for – naar han omtalte dette forhold for kolleger i utlandet – erklære de, at en saadan fællesundervisning vilde være aldeles umulig hos dem."

²⁷¹ Ibid.: 222 Citation in original: "Kvinder blir jo for det meste i landet, mens mændene maa til udladet for at perfektionere sig i sprog og lære de større handelsforhold at kjende. Kvinderne betrakter ofte handelsgymnasieutdannelsen som noget forløbig, senere gifter de sig kanske og lægger sin handelsvirksomhet aldeles bort, eller fortsætter den som sin mands medhjælp."

²⁷² *Den Merkantile Klub 1894 – 1944* (1944): "Lover for den merkantile klub i 1944": 215 – 220. This fact also excluded the female graduates from the celebration of the 50th anniversary in 1925. The gala dinner

the strong democratic challenge to both the economic leadership and political life in Norway.²⁷³ The conservative doctrine of the commercial bourgeoisie, in contrast, underwent no feminist challenge.

Gender Conservatism

Little has been written about the gender practices of the Norwegian commercial bourgeoisie at the turn of last century. One reason for this is the fact that the democratic challenge to Norwegian capitalism has been elaborated from a perspective of class interests, not gender, and that historians of women and gender, on the other hand, have preferred to study the intellectual or political elite, as opposed to the commercial one.²⁷⁴ But the guiding perspectives are of course not the only reason why so few have come to enter this very promising field of research. The issue suffers also from a problem of documentation. Archives, as well as the institutional histories and written memorials of the business schools, account primarily for the experiences of men, not women.²⁷⁵ CHG's female evening course, which ran for more than half a century, resulted in only one written memorial, penned by the director that followed Polaczek in 1928, whereas the male encounters are well documented.²⁷⁶ How the female graduates' experienced their schooldays, is therefore far from clear. What they turned to next – after graduation – is however better known, due to the *Festschrift* written by Polaczek. From what is documented here one get the impression that many of the women who undertook the one-year course in fact entered wage-earning work afterwards, in business offices and general commerce.²⁷⁷

Another important source is the autobiographical writings of the Norwegian writer and Nobel Prize winner Sigrid Undset.²⁷⁸ She enrolled at CHG's female evening course after finishing Ragna Nielsen's school in June 1897. Left with only one parent –

arranged by the Mercantile Club at Grand Hotel's "Rococo Hall", and brought together 179 men and no women. See *ibid.*: 92 – 93.

²⁷³ Amdam, Rolv Petter et al (1997): 187.

²⁷⁴ See for instance Haldor Byrkjelfot et al eds. 2001, and in particular the chapters written by Francis Sejersted and Christine Myrvang.

²⁷⁵ See Bibliography, "Written Memorials, Manifestos and School Programs"

²⁷⁶ Oslo Handelsgymnasium (1928): *Det ett-årige eftermiddagskursus for kvinner gjennom 50 år.*

²⁷⁷ 37 – 167.

her mother – Undset understood from early on that she had to get ready for wage-earning work as long as she remained unmarried. As was the case for most other middle-class girls at that time, this meant to prepare either for a life as a teacher or to look for an administrative post in public or private offices. For Undset, the choice fell to office work. When she started out on the one-year training program, in January 1898, CHG had three parallel classes. Undset graduated the following December from class C, as one of 24 pupils, and was offered a position immediately after, in the office of an electrical agency in Stortingsgaten called Wisbech.²⁷⁹ And it was during the ten years²⁸⁰ working for this company that Undset started to write, at night. According to her, writing was a question of surviving the days, in order “to keep up with ‘the ‘howler’ office manager Brun and my co-slaves in the office’”.²⁸⁰ In the short-story collection *Fattige skjæbner* (The Poor in Lot), Undset characterizes the office milieu with both wit and bitterness. Among middle-class women, clerical work was considered to be a virtue of necessity, and thus nothing to be proud of. Bluntly speaking, this was also the reason why Undset from early on was fed up with equal-rights’ feminists such as Gina Krogh amongst others.²⁸¹ By accusing them of being too naive and detached from reality, Undset attacked the bourgeois ideals of liberation and development. In her essay collection *Et kvinde-synspunkt* (A Woman’s Perspective) published in 1919, Norwegian feminists were disapproved of for being too occupied with formal rights and claims, and for forgetting women of the past – those who contributed to their own liberation and happiness through self-sacrifice and the renunciation of things like family and beauty.²⁸² Thus, she writes,

we find it difficult to think that these women could have found substitutes for the happiness of the lover, the life of the wife or the mother, in fighting for the right to vote, better education or access to offices. I’m still completely sure that it is true that many of these women found it. And it would be horrible for the family of mankind if it hadn’t been like this as all men are their mothers’ sons –

²⁷⁸ See in particular her short story *Fattige skjæbne* (1912) and her essay “Hvorfor jeg skrev ” (“Why I wrote”) (1947), in Borgild Krane (1970): 292 – 295.

²⁷⁹ Skille, nan Bentzen (2002): 3.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. referring to Gidske Anderson (1989): *Sigrid Undset – et liv*.

²⁸¹ Johansen, Kristin (1996): 45, 47, 53 – 73.

²⁸² Undset, Sigrid (1914/1919): 39 – 40.

and why should women not be able to sacrifice their own individual life's happiness through fighting for something they believe in...²⁸³

Undset's major point was that many of the bourgeois feminists tended to forget the obligation that arrives together with a right, an obligation to act in accordance with your own beliefs. Only when women start looking upon their rights as duties, Undset wrote, will they have arrived at the level of culture set by women a hundred years before.²⁸⁴

The writings of Undset have often been cited in the support of anti-feminists or traditionalists. This is, in my opinion, partially wrong, because she in fact communicated an evident anti-bourgeois stance. She criticizes not only the bourgeois women part of the feminist organizations, but also the bourgeois values that gave rise to them. This criticism was evidently influenced by her educational and working experiences. Her encounter with the business school and the private business milieu seems to have made her more realistic, but also cynical, compared to other female middle-class professionals, such as teachers – a dominant group within the feminists' organizations. Contact between the business school and Oslo's feminist elite, on the other hand, was almost non-existent. Except for a female inspector, the CHG employed no female teachers until 1907, when Miss Figenbau-Olsen was hired as the new teacher of typewriting.²⁸⁵ Moreover, the female course, but also female office work, entailed few intellectual challenges, something Undset soon felt as a problem. At the CHG, general educative subjects were reserved for the male pupils, something that made initiative and independence in the office into male privileges.

This supports one of the main points of this thesis; i.e. that the move towards academic business instruction was a male middle-class venture. Consequently, the making of future businessmen was perceived as CHG's chief activity, something that made the female graduates marginal in all of its activities. The incident from 1900, when the school celebrated its 25th anniversary also demonstrates this, as women were not included in the festivities. However, the exclusion was not left uncontested.

²⁸³ Ibid.: 40.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.: 41.

²⁸⁵ Oslo Handelsgymnasium (1928): *Det ett-årige eftermiddagskursus for kvinner gjennom 50 år*: 31.

A few days after the official celebration of the school had taken place, the incident was discussed in *Morgenbladet*. Under the headline “Post festum. No ladies?” an anonymous group of women, of whom some were former graduates of CHG, demonstrated their deepest disappointment, but also anger, with the omission of the female graduates from the celebrations.²⁸⁶ They wrote the following:

It has evoked indignation among all women, not least the many competent ladies that once attended *Christiania Handelsgymnasium*, that females were completely slighted in the festivities that have taken place in relation to the business school's 25th anniversary. The invitations which were published in various newspapers stated that ‘all previous pupils’ were invited to or had the right to sign up for the various festivities. However, when addressing an enquiry about this to the organizing committee, we heard to our utter surprise that they, with the designation ‘all’, meant male pupils only.²⁸⁷

The main thrust of the article was the injustice of the episode. According to the formal invitation, the fête would be open to “all former pupils”, but when the women wanted to sign up, they were not welcome because of their sex. In other words, they were not seen as part of the schools’ former students. Given the high number of women who had attended CHG since the beginning, and who thus “[made] up a considerable part of the country’s capable and respectable female commercial class”, treatment of this kind was unacceptable, the women wrote.²⁸⁸ The anniversary concerned the school as an institution, not those who attended it in the first year. When they heard about the plan to give a school ball or an excursion for CHG’s current pupils, including the girls, there was no other solution than to voice their disapproval. The conclusion went as follows:

²⁸⁶ NB: *Morgenbladet* (29.08.1900): 1.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.: Citation in original: “Det har vakt almindelig Indignation blant alle Kvinder – og ikke mindst blant de mange dyktige Damer, der er udgaaede som Elever fra Christiania Handelsgymnasium – at Damerne er fuldstændig forbigaaede ved de Festligheder, som nu har været foranstaltede i Anledning af Handelsgymnasiets 25 Aars-Jubilæum. Det har i Aviserne været indtaget Notiser og Bekjendtgørelser om, at “alle tidligere Elever” var Indbydere til eller havde adgang til at tegne sig som Deltager i de forskjellige Festligheder. Paa Forespørgsel hos Festkomiteen fik man imidlertid til sin Forbauselse høre, at der med ‘alle’ kun mentes mandlige Elever.”

²⁸⁸ Ibid.: Citation in original: “udgjør en ikke ringe Del af Landets dyktige og respekterede kvindelige Handelstand.”

There's a rumor going around that the organizing committee aims to hold a ball or to organize an excursion with the funds left over from the money allocated by the executive committee of the municipality for the anniversary celebration. This ball, excursion or similar event will be open to current female pupils together with the male. However, a plan of this kind strikes us as being the same as treating women like children, to whom their parents say: 'you will all get leftovers tomorrow if you behave quietly and nice today'.²⁸⁹

The last allegorical point in the women's protest letter – that ignoring the female graduates was like treating grown up ladies like children – is interesting as it illustrates not only the bourgeois feature of the gender regime (re)produced by the business school. But it also proves the importance of gender in the making of the graduates' professional "self". Put differently, the businessmen's professional identity seemed closely related to – or depended on – gender. Women's presence during the receptions was therefore perceived as a threat to their professional project. Still, one might wonder why the coalescence between professionalism and gender was so important, given that there were major differences between the male and female programs in terms of both knowledge and duration.

Theoretical versus Practical Knowledge

"The more knowledge, the more power" had been CHG's official slogan during the anniversary celebrations in 1900.²⁹⁰ If we, on the other hand, compare its "male" syllabus to the technical schools, one understands that it was a statement with some modifications. Like the French business schools, CHG was far less specialized than the technical colleges which developed in the same period. It was also one year shorter than the others, including the classical gymnasium. The technical school of Trondheim, for instance, developed into a three-year course before the turn of the century. And when the Parliament decided to build a technical university in the late 1890s, the institution was

²⁸⁹ Ibid.: Citation in original: "Det forlyder, as der inden Festkomiteen skal være Tale om, det de muligens tiloverblevne Midler at de Penge, som Formandskabet bevilgede til Jubilæets Festligholdelse, at foranstalte "et Bal, en Udflugt eller lignende" for Gymnasiets nuværende kvindelige Elever, sammen med de mandlige, Dette vilde dog, forekommer det os, være at behandle Damerne omtrent som Børn, til hvem Forældrene, naar de holder Selskab, siger: "Vær nu stille, saa skal Dere faa Levninger imorgen"!"

²⁹⁰ NB: *Morgenladet* (25.08.1900): 2.

defined as being equal to the university and other academic institutions.²⁹¹ The standard length of studies for civil engineers was four years, whereas for the business graduates, it was only two. Was it a feeling of inferiority that made the Mercantile Club feel the need to foster their maleness by keeping women out? There are at least two incidents that support this interpretation. The first is the economic boom of the 1890s, which had a rather negative effect on the number of applicants to a knowledge-driven institution like the CHG. The second is the debate concerning the lengthening of CHG's male program by one year, set off by the Mercantile Club in 1894.

Like the CHF, the men of the Mercantile Club aimed at getting actively involved in "the problems concerning the education and work of the commercial estate". Still, there was a major difference between the two, and the ways in which they approached their goals. Whereas the commercial society of Oslo was a municipal organization for all men engaged in trade and commerce regardless of their education, the Mercantile Club gathered only the "educated" ones from CHG's two-year program. This social distinction made the projects of the Mercantile Club generally more elitist or exclusive, as they aimed at improving the situation primarily of their own members, and not the commercial estate as a whole.²⁹² One excellent example of this institutional orientation or loyalty was the talk of a placement office of the kind held by elite schools abroad.²⁹³ Paragraph two of the preamble stated that the club was "to assist its members with employment", but to find suitable positions for the young was, from early on, a difficult task.²⁹⁴ In 1894/95, the club received only 12 offers. And the following academic year even less decided to apply.

The economic recession in the decade 1877 – 1887 had been replaced by a new growth period in Norway, which was particularly visible in the capital. From the second half of the 1890s, productivity increased in all main sectors, at the same time as the two most important sectors – industry and services – took on a greater economic significance.²⁹⁵ In periods characterized by strong economic growth, theoretical

²⁹¹ Waahle, Astrid (2001), Hanish, Tore-Jørgen & Even Lange (1985).

²⁹² *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 15.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*: 18.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: 21.

²⁹⁵ Danielsen, Rolf et al (1995): 294.

knowledge gave one few advantages on the labor market, especially in the commercial sphere.²⁹⁶ The boom period between 1896 and 1899 was hence a golden age for shorter mercantile courses, of 3 to 6 or 12 months duration, such as those of the commercial school of Otto Treider, which has already been mentioned. CHG, in contrast, had suffered from flagging demand since the beginning of the decade. The bottom was hit in 1897, when only 37 pupils signed up for its two-year program.²⁹⁷ How did the school and the graduates respond to the challenge represented by the decline of applicants?

Strangely enough, the crisis experienced by CHG in the 1890s was met with the idea of further expansion, not reduction. Both the school's management and its graduates wanted to reorganize its syllabus as result of the decline in the market. Along with an evening program similar to that which already existed for women, the educational committee started to play with the idea of creating a one-year-long business course for students, hoping that this would increase both the market and the demand for commercial education. The old dream of a three-year-long business school resurfaced too, but when the final proposition was submitted for comments, the board of the Mercantile Club had changed their minds. Instead of prolonging the male program with a third year, the club proposed to instigate a higher but voluntary course for those who had already passed the final examination. Organized as a "reading institute", this year could later develop into a higher business school, a so-called "høyskole" or *hochschule*.²⁹⁸ In this way the graduates would be able to qualify for higher positions outside the strictly commercial sphere, the men argued, such as in public and industrial administration. The right to apply for work as consuls, regulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was however their major concern, just as it was in Paris – among the owners and graduates of HEC.

The Mercantile Club was not reluctant in sharing its own ambitions with the outside world. Already during its first year, in 1894, they managed to bring the issue of CHG's length and educational quality up to public debate. "To what extent should the course of Christiania Handelsgymnasium be of more than two years duration?" was the leading title of a lecture given on the 28th of October, in front of more than 200

²⁹⁶ Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gerd Mordt (1992).

²⁹⁷ *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 29.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

supportive members. All the same, not everybody seemed to agree that theoretical knowledge was the key to success in the world of business.²⁹⁹ The Stock-Exchange Committee and the CHF, two important representatives of the commercial community, gave the idea of any improvements within the field the thumbs down. Two years of reading was considered long enough for somebody going into business. The conservative press, another important ally of the business school, showed their concern for something they thought was moving in the wrong direction. The teaching was not too short – it was rather too long! Its editor was intensely cynical, and accused the graduates for being both snobbish and lazy.³⁰⁰ Their high ages (20) combined with “considerable theoretical knowledge and comparable pride” would make the lads useless in practice, he wrote.³⁰¹ “We are simply drowning in all these new disciplines and vocational schools and programs and theoretical knowledge. Hard work is the best schoolbook.”³⁰² According to another magazine, *Farmand*, the circle around the business school showed an “erroneous belief in intellectual work”.³⁰³

Instead of having a three year long course in a *gymnasium* for pupils between the age of 16 and 19, one should start considering the possibility of creating a one-year-long program for young people, who after the “middle-school” exam have to spend two to four years in a store.³⁰⁴

Evidently, the focus was changing.

Haakon Syversten et al. have interpreted the quarrel for and against a third year as proof of a changing business mentality towards the turn of last century, a change that to a larger extent took the pragmatic British businessman as its model.³⁰⁵ Within the British tradition of *noblesse oblige* the college-made man was looked upon with certain skepticism, and for this reason the UK developed business schools much later than most

²⁹⁹ Ibid.: 19 Citation in original: “Hvorvidt bør Christiania Handelsgymnasiums Kursus vare længere end 2 Aar.”

³⁰⁰ NB: *Morgebladet* (26.10.1894), referred to in *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 20.

³⁰¹ Ibid.: Citation in original: “en hel Del Theori og tilsvarende Selvfølelse.”

³⁰² Ibid.: Citation in original: “Vi drunker snart i alle disse Fag og Fagskoler og Kurser og theoretisk Viden. Strengt Arbeid i Livets Skole er den beste Læremester”, also quoted in Haakon Syversten et al (1975): 62.

³⁰³ Ibid.: Citation in original: “Overtro paa Bøger.”

³⁰⁴ Syversten, Haakon et al (1975): 62 Citation in original: “Istdetfor et tre-aarig Kursis paa Gymnasiet fra Elevernes 16 til 19 Aar, fortjener det Overveielse om man ikke heller burde indrette et et-aarigt Kursus for unge Mennesker, der efter absolvertet Middelskole-Examen har tilbragt to til fire Aar i Butik.”

other Western European countries.³⁰⁶ In Norway, this mental reorientation among businessmen hence put the capital's business school into question. Practice, and not theoretical knowledge, was said to be the essential thing.

Others have made similar remarks to those of Syvertsen et al about the “western” orientation among Norwegian businessmen towards the turn of last century. “The Norwegian commercial bourgeoisie had traditionally always looked to Britain”, Christine Myrvang wrote a few years back.³⁰⁷ The question is, however, to what extent CHG – and their graduates – actually aimed at preserving the German model when launching the idea of improving the existing programs. As we have seen, the CHG was not that German, either in terms of its content or structure. The pure theoretical or scientific disciplines were never included in the program, on account of the argument that such classes had no practical value. The useful or pragmatic businessman hence was a visible ideal-type in Norway long before the late nineteenth century.

The graduates' identity seems, moreover, to have been far more institutionally embedded than knowledge based. In my opinion, they spoke of the case of CHG as an institution, when initiating the debate on the length and the quality of their school. “The movement that has developed from within the Mercantile Club with the aim of prolonging the course of the gymnasium has not come from the gymnasium, but from its former pupils”, director Larssen acknowledged in 1894.³⁰⁸ To conclude that the quarrel concerning CHG in the 1890s thus resulted from the emerging western-orientation among Norwegian businessman, in the ways Syvertsen et al. have done, is hence partly wrong. Of course, the economic boom made education less important in order to find suitable work in the commercial services, a fact that hit CHG hard since it aimed at preparing suitable leaders and functionaries for this specific sector. In the 1890s, a shorter course, i.e. of 3 to 6 months duration, was often enough to get a suitable post in the fast-expanding services, which affected the view – as much as value – of academic training

³⁰⁵ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 64 – 63.

³⁰⁶ Wilson, John (1992).

³⁰⁷ See for instance Christine Myrvang (2001): 159.

³⁰⁸ *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 20 Citation in original: “den bevegelse som er vakt innen [the Mercantile Club] for å få gymnasiets kurs forlænget, ikke er utgått fra gymnaset, men fra de tidligere elever selv.”

within the commercial community. But an additional mistrust among many Norwegians was the institutional boundary-making that the Mercantile Club was preparing.

The debate on the possible prolongation or shortening of the courses had therefore a more complex cultural-discursive embedding than the rivalry between theory and practice. As important was the attempt or will to create the CHG into a more exclusive or elitist school, and I would argue that it was the second that got the graduates into an argument with the establishment. The dispute in 1894 between the members, the school's director and the press resulted from a deep cultural distrust within the business community of social distinctions reproduced with the aid of educational or institutional boundaries. It was as if the Protestant ethic's emphasis on individual freedom in combination with radical claims for equality had played a trick on the Mercantile Club. This made the dream of a higher business school fall through, as it was cited to be in the interests of the graduates and their "swelled heads". As a matter of fact, not until legitimacy was provided through the national question, in 1905, did the club dare to rephrase its old dream.

New Initiatives and Gendered Hierarchies

With the dissolution of the Sweden-Norway union in 1905, the Liberal Party lost its great issue. As a substitute for the old question of political – or national – independence, a new manifesto was created wherein the slogan "Norway's new working day" was formulated. This brought new topics onto the political agenda, such as the ownership of natural and economic resources, among other issues. The plan to provide Norway with a higher commercial school equal to that which already existed within areas like agriculture and engineering emerged, therefore, along the political lines of supporters of a joint Liberal-Conservative merger.³⁰⁹ The attempts to restructure the party system along more marked social and economical lines failed, however. In 1912, the Liberal Party entered a new governing period lasting until 1920, through adopting a largely middle-of-the-road position, which indeed was to affect the mobilization for a higher business school in Norway.

³⁰⁹ Danielsen, Rolf et al (1995): 309 – 310.

For the sake of the Mercantile Club, the renewed – and highly legitimate – attention to the issue commenced with a lecture in 1906, “About business schools and the call for an institution of higher mercantile learning in our country” given by E. Simonsen – CHG’s teacher of chemistry.³¹⁰ His claim was that Norway needed a business school of the kind that already existed on the Continent, but as its attainment would be years away, he recommended starting out with what already existed. The first step towards a higher business school was thus to extend CHG’s main program with an optional third year. As a matter of fact, this was completely in line with what the Mercantile Club had suggested a decade earlier and what Nicolai Rygg – an energetic spokesperson for higher business learning – had characterized as “the Managers’ Class”.³¹¹ The club members agreed for this reason to follow Simonsen’s advice, and wrote a resolution the same year, wherein it stated that

[w]ithin the understanding that the goal of higher business education in our country should be a ‘Higher business school’, one has for the time being to recommend that our existing ‘Commercial gymnasium’ immediately is made ready to enact the extension of an optional facultative year as already proposed.³¹²

A few years later, the Mercantile Club decided, however, to leave aside the agreement about reinforcing the institutional position of the CHG, fearing that a too strong weight on precisely this school would postpone the project needlessly. Instead, all of its energy was put into displaying a higher business school as a *national* interest, and this time they managed to find a willing ear within the CHF and its country-wide league; the Norwegian Commercial Confederation (NHF).³¹³ Because, in 1909, the NHF, which the Mercantile Club had come to join the same year in order to secure legitimacy and resources to its case, decided to make the question of a national business school a main

³¹⁰ *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 58.

³¹¹ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 23. Rygg stated this in an article in *Verdens Gang* in 1903.

³¹² *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 58 Citation in original: “I Erkjendelsen af, at Maalet for den høieste Handelsundervisning ogsaa i vort Land bør være en Handelshøyskole, maa man dog indtil videre paa det varmeste anbefale, at vort nuværende Handelsgymnasium snarest sættes i Stand til at foretage den foreslaaede Udvidelse med fakulativt Tilægsaar.” OHG got an optional third year in 1911, known to contemporaries as the “Manager’s Class” or *Chefsklassen*.

³¹³ In Norwegian, this was *Den Norske Handelstands Fællesforening* (NHF).

priority. A planning committee was established soon after, with the mandate of preparing a strategy as well as a financial plan for a future 'Norwegian business school'. But, due to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the project was put on hold for almost seven years. So when the decision to address the Norwegian Parliament finally was taken, in June 1916, the political situation had changed quite a bit.

Apart from a steady political leadership under the ship-owner Gunnar Knudsen, the First World War witnessed the apprenticeship of the Interventionist State in Norway. The war had made a deep impact on the country's economy, and the national, but very liberalist, discourse of the NHF was therefore not as euphoric as before. The society's request, forwarded to the Parliament in November 1916, confirmed a clear liberal stand to the issue, which meant that the role of the state was not mentioned at all. It was the role of the commercial class that was highlighted – the men who would lead Norway's commercial activities on the international arena the day when the war was over. It went as follows:

The times we are living in are difficult, but when the war is over, and when the states which participate in it, have managed to recuperate, one has to think that the competition among countries will be stronger than ever. Then it will be of great importance, in particular for the smaller nations, to be well prepared even intellectually. Our country is more than others left to compete economically on the international arena. With our large sources of energy and woods, which many great industrial plants are attached, with the wealth of our mountains, our fishery, and shipping – all this leads us to the large world market. The demand for intelligence and knowledge among the men of commerce will thus be great.³¹⁴

The proposition had several holes. Aside from the question of ownership and resources for maintenance of the school, NHF said for instance nothing about its location.

³¹⁴ Dated the 22.11.1916, and cited in St.prp. nr. 99 (1917): Om oprettelse av en handelshøiskole og om bevilgning av kr. 50.000, 00 til paabegyndelse av byggearbeider for en saadan: 2 *Citation in original*: "Naar engang verdenskrigen er til ende, naar de stater, som har deltatt i den, er kommet over den slappelse, som vel i nogen til fremover vil gjøre sig gjældende, maa man forutsætte, at man vil bli vidne til en konkurranse mellom nationerne som aldri før. Da vil det gjælde – ikke mindst for de smaa nationer – at staa vel rustet ogsaa intellektuelt. Vort land er fremfor mange andre henvist til at delta i den store verdenskonkurranse. Vore vældige kraftkilder med den til disse knyttede storindustri, vort skogsvirke og al den industri, som dette avføder, vore fjeldes rigdommer, vore fiskerier, vor skibsfart – alt henviser os til at søke de store verdensmarkeder. Kravene til intelligens og kunnskap hos næringslivets mænd vil bli store."

In a newly-enlightened national community like the Norwegian one at this time, location was of great importance. The decision to place the Norwegian Technical University (NTH) in Trondheim arrived as result of the argument that its location outside the capital would have a positive effect on the development “of the feeling of national solidarity and unity, and through that increase understanding of the particularities of each part of the country”.³¹⁵ It was, in contrast, a well-known secret that most of NHF’s members, and particularly those belonging to CHF and the Mercantile Club, wanted the new school in Oslo. Through newspaper articles and petitions to the Senate, they did what they could to influence the decision-making process. But when it was announced that a second proposition had arrived from a group of powerful men from Bergen, complemented with a financial security of more than half a million Norwegian *kroner*, the battle seemed lost. And for the gender dimension this loss seems to have had major impacts. As a matter of fact, it repealed the two-sex model as an explicit reference point for the organization of higher business education.

When the Minister of commerce, Friis Petersen, reviewed the plan to support the building of a higher commercial school in Parliament on the 27th of April 1917, he leaned pretty much on what had been developed by the “Society for a business school in Bergen”, led by Kr. Lehmkuhl. Despite the private donators, the Minister envisioned the school as an autonomous public institution, under the control of the Norwegian Parliament, on the one hand, and a staff of professors and teachers, on the other, “who apart from teaching would conduct scientific research”, in the way they did at the Stockholm School of Economics.³¹⁶ In this way, the business school would serve as Norway’s center for scientific research on commercial issues, the Minister uttered, a center where business practices could be combined with theory. This demanded a location where “teachers as well as students should have the possibility to engage in and observe a dynamic business life at a close distance”, a prerequisite that basically meant either Oslo or Bergen.³¹⁷ At the time, these were the only two Norwegian towns with a

³¹⁵ Ibid.: 13. Citation in original: “at det vilde bidra til utviklingen av samfølelsen her i landet og en utviklet forstaaelse av de enkelte landsdeler eiendommerligheter.”

³¹⁶ Ibid.: 13 – 14. The Stockholm School of Economics was founded in 1909.

³¹⁷ Ibid.: 12 Citation in original: “saavel lærere som elever bør ha anledning til at komme i kontakt med og på nært hold at iagttå det forretningsliv.”

commercial milieu of any significance. When the final choice fell to Bergen, however, it had to do with the force of Norwegian localism in the years both before and after the union with Sweden was dissolved. The head of the “Society for a business school in Bergen”, Kr. Lehmkuhl, was also a very well experienced politician and businessman. As a former cabinet member and ship owner he had thorough networks to both the political and economic elite of Norway.

The program developed by the “Society for a business school in Bergen” founded in 1915, was extremely well prepared. Many of Norway’s prosperous and powerful businessmen donated money to it. Even the Queen and the King were listed as contributors. But it should not be underestimated that the force behind the proposition from Bergen stemmed from happenings that had taken place long before the Norwegian Parliament voted Prince Carl of Denmark as King of Norway. As the current chapter has displayed, the tradition of commercial education in Bergen was also long and strong, even if the capital was one step ahead in terms of higher business training. But in 1903, a two-year-long commercial gymnasium was also established in Bergen, with the aim of creating a third year in some years’ time.³¹⁸ So when the idea of a countrywide institution of commercial training turned up in 1915, there was complete support from the town’s inhabitants, and the town’s commercial class in particular.

When the decision was taken to support the building of a national business school in Bergen, in 1917, the Minister, Friis Pedersen, said little about the school’s entry requirements. The only thing known was that admission would be possible either via the *Ex-A* or completed exam from the upper-secondary commercial schools like the CHG, the Bergen commercial-high school (BHG), or the very recent Trondheim commercial high-school (THG), created in 1913. For the time being, these institutions were not regarded as being equal to the classical gymnasium, even if they, in Norwegian, carried the name “commercial gymnasium” (*handelsgymnas*). In practice, this implied that a degree from one of them did not qualify for entry into the faculties and other institutions of higher learning, except the Department for Governmental-Economy (*Statsøkonomi*) studies at the University of Oslo. From 1907 onwards, commercial graduates with the grade “above average” or better, gained access to this particular faculty, on request from

the Mercantile Club.³¹⁹ But for the new business school, this lack of academic weight or recognition had little importance. On the contrary, students with an ordinary *Ex-A* would in fact be asked to show basic skills in accounting and bookkeeping before admission, to make sure that they were at the same level as those coming from the mercantile field. The parliamentary proposition, which was later approved, also mentioned the possibility for more practical businessmen to apply, on the condition that they had sufficient knowledge in generalist subjects like language and science. To what extent this also included women the proposition had less to say.

Unlike the proposal of the NHF, with several references to the so-called “men of commerce”, Friis Pedersen never mentioned the sex of the student body directly. But, given the entry requirements mentioned above, we can know that most of the applicants would have been men. In both Oslo and in Bergen, as well as at the newly-established business gymnasium of Trondheim, 99% of the pupils were boys.³²⁰ The background for this persistent male dominance, especially in the provinces, was the fact that both BHG and THG had adopted the two-sex model of Oslo, in the sense that the two- (and later three-) year programs were accompanied with one-year-long evening courses for women. By having the female clerk, and later secretary, as its professional model, these evening programs were therefore explicitly gendered as female, just like the evening classes that had been run by the CHG since 1879. The commercial gymnasiums, the “manager’s class” and the newly planned national business school in Bergen, in contrast, aimed at educating male functionaries and businessmen. This maintained the two-sex model indirectly, or from “below”, in the sense that women had formal access to the previous male courses, but men were excluded from the female courses.

In addition to this, women became also more numerous in the ranks of elementary commercial education, lasting from five months to a year, part-time or full-time. One of them, *Ambjørnsens Handelsskole* in Halden – or Fredrikshald as was its name at that time – had, from its opening in 1918, an equal amount of young girls and boys among its

³¹⁸ This was realized in 1912, one year later than in Oslo.

³¹⁹ *Den Merkantile Club 1894 – 1944* (1944): 55 – 56.

³²⁰ Støren, Wilhelm & Johan I. Skjæran (1988): 21 – 22, 26, Sandberg, Øystein (red. 1954): 65.

pupils.³²¹ The teaching, which emphasized basic commercial skills such as debit and credit, accounting on exchange rates, invoicing, correspondence, bookkeeping, and later also typewriting and stenography, did not differentiate between the sexes. In Oslo, and in other larger towns, the tradition of educating women in separate classes continued, however. As a matter of fact, the commercial evening course for women launched by the CHG continued without large reforms until the 1930s. The only element of considerable change between 1879 and 1942 was the introduction of stenography (1899) and type writing (1907) in the first part of the 1900s, about which more is said in Chapter 7. For sure, this contributed not only in reinforcing the differences between higher and lower levels, and between male and female versions of business education, but also to a more general reproduction of traditional gender roles within the business sector. By gendering certain new tools and operations as female as opposed to male, the business schools contributed powerfully in the reproduction of traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Although men and women mastered typewriting and stenography in the beginning, they were soon marked off as so-called female subjects and activities. With the aid of the institutions of commercial education, among others, the typewriter became the very symbol of women's role – or place – in the modern corporation.³²²

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have shown the ways in which the Norwegian experience of higher business education developed differently than in France with respect to gender. The essence of this difference was not the cultural logic or reasoning of men and women's role – and place – within higher business education. As in France, the sexes were educated in accordance with the bourgeois notion of separate spheres, which apart from physical separation meant educating the sexes in accordance to do distinct or different types of work within the business community. The business schools' curricula reflected this in the sense that the boys had both a longer and more "solid" education, due to the

See Appendix 8 for the percentage or number of female pupils in Norwegian commercial gymnasiums, and Appendix 17 for an overview of the names and number of commercial gymnasiums which were established after 1903 in accordance with the two-sex model.

³²¹ SA: F03, Ed. 001.

³²² Hagemann, Gro (1994), Davies, Margery W, (1982), Geertsen, Kirsten (1990).

importance given to subjects of general culture. This illustrates rather well how the commercial estate felt inferior to the elite, and tried to compensate educationally – through combining the teaching of the commercial “sciences” with general knowledge.

What differentiated the experiences of the two countries was more the ways in which the movement – for a male business education – was organized institutionally, and how the business schools communicated or secured its masculinity. Whereas the French, and especially the Parisian, business schools adapted the elitist standards of the *grandes écoles*, the CHG created a female evening course to complement the male program. As a result, a two-sex system or model evolved similar to that which existed on a lower level in France. But in Norway, this dual model had not only a strong normative impact on the gender arrangements in the administrative office, but it also fashioned the further development of the field of higher – and later upper-secondary – education. When the business communities of large Norwegian towns like Bergen and Trondheim decided to establish “commercial gymnasiums” of the kind which already existed in the capital, they literally copied the two-sex model of the CHG.

The 1896 law on “higher schools”, stressing men and women’s equal access to institutions of upper-secondary and higher learning, had few moderating effects on the model chosen by the Norwegian commercial estate. Apart from the attempt to provide girls with the formal right to apply for admission to the two-year “male” program, the female courses continued as before. Its leading logic or reasoning was that men and women operating within the commercial sphere still belonged to different realms. Subsequently, there was no reason to suppress those courses which aimed at forming commercial functionaries out of women, nor to provide the boys with the right to apply for them. This made the two-sex model implicit at the higher level, but explicit at the lower levels. The female courses were not perceived as “higher”, although the entry requirements were just the same as for the two-year program previously reserved for male applicants. Instead they were looked upon as vocational, and thus inferior to the other courses, just as in France.

These similarities between France and Norway with respect to the organization of higher commercial education limits, in my opinion, the usefulness of the concept “democratic capitalism” developed by Francis Sejersted, when dealing with the

Norwegian capitalist system in which the business schools operated. As this chapter shows, the Norwegian commercial class was far from being as democratically minded as Sejersted has portrayed it. Actually, they showed few if any signs of what he has called a “feminist-emancipatory element” shared by the political elite and other intellectuals in the mid- and late-1800s. The Norwegian “small” – or commercial – bourgeoisie, which gave birth to the first institutions of higher business education, were clearly status-minded in their practices. And gender was evidently one of the key “differences” they cultivated, in order to gain social and professional legitimacy for their project. In truth, the man – woman divide seems to have been far more important for the construction of the business schools’ “self” in Norway than it was in France. The institutional and professional realization of HEC was, as we have seen, primarily related to social class, whereas its masculinity was communicated – or secured – more indirectly, through admission policies and pedagogy. In Oslo, in contrast, the commercial community showed few explicit attempts to curtail the social background of the graduates. In its place, they saw the need to distinguish between men and women, and continued to do so even after gender equality in the “higher schools” was introduced in 1896.

What the Norwegian bourgeois “ethos” had more problems accepting, however, and which also proves Sejersted right, were social distinctions and boundary-making with the aid of formal institutions. The dispute following the Mercantile Club’s initiative to create a three-year course – thereby developing it further into a “real” business school – shows that there was a weak cultural acceptance for the kind of social distinction or merit that existed in France. This cultural skepticism displays, in many ways, what Sejersted wanted to communicate through his writings on the Norwegian “Sonderweg”, especially the egalitarian orientation of the public debate. But, I would again make the point that this egalitarianism counted for relationships between equals (men) and not non-equals (men and women), although it evidently catches important differences between the discourses on the bourgeoisie in France and Norway. Simplistically put, one might say that in Norway the quality of being bourgeois was combined with the sensation or illusion of being part of the people, and not to tower above the masses, as in France. In this way, the new political and intellectual elite of Norway was genuine anti-elitist in their “folk-like” discourse and culture, and in creating a school system which aimed at

educating “everybody”, and not specific social strata or groups, like in France. Such a folk-based approach to democracy stood in sharp contrast to the elitist meritocracy celebrated by the French republicans.

The passage of the 1896 school law in Norway, which in principle opened higher education up for the Norwegian “people”, regardless social class and gender, was, therefore, in line with a wider cultural project, driven by an egalitarian but also highly practical-minded middle class. In relation to the issue of formal gender equality, practical considerations about people’s ability to make a living had a major impact on the modern attitude towards women gaining ground within the new liberal state, after the Parliament was made responsible for the government in 1884.³²³ Within the more ambitious – or socially “insecure” – groups of society, like the commercial bourgeoisie and the growing strata of white-collar workers, it was however different. There, sexist or gender traditionalist discourses and practices persisted without large disturbances or challenges. The Parliament’s decision to support the making of a true Norwegian business school in 1917 reinforced this further. Its explicit object was to give men new possibilities to qualify professionally within the commercial sectors.

The decision to support the plan from Bergen, instead of the one from Oslo, displays another important difference between the French and the Norwegian path of higher business education. The argument used in order to support locating it outside the capital illustrates the center – periphery axis coined by the sociologist Stein Rokkan in order to explain Norwegian political culture and voting behavior.³²⁴ An interesting observation on this axis is that the development of higher business education in France and Norway developed in almost opposite directions. While the French enlargement started in the periphery, and was thereafter overtaken by the “centrifugal” forces of the capital and its rather snobbish “carriers”, it took, in many ways, the opposite direction in Norway.

³²³ Rune Slagstad (1998) has developed the concept *Venstrestaten* to express the social and political regime of Norway between 1884 and 1940, and is an answer to Jens Arup Seip’s conceptualization of the political regime it replaced *Embetsmannsstaten* (1814 – 1884).

³²⁴ Rokkan, Stein (1987).

Ne dit-on pas depuis longtemps que vos académiciens ne sont élus que grâce aux femmes? N'êtes-vous pas le pays avec les 'Salons'...?

Mrs. Pankhurst ³²⁵

CHAPTER FIVE

The Early Feminist Challenge to the French Model

The mass-entry of young women into clerical work during the Great War had, in France, not only consequences for the sexual division of labor in the business office.³²⁶ Just as important was its effects on the established system of higher business education. The French war experience, which indeed was traumatic in terms of human loss, gave rise to a completely new institution in Paris – a female business school “pour les jeunes filles a qui la guerre prolongée enlevait l'espoir de trouver un mari”.³²⁷ Initiated by the Parisian feminist Louli Sanua, the school aimed at preparing middle-class girls for administrative work in the business realm.

The Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) showed at first little interest in the feminist creation of Sanua, called École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF). Her offer to sell the school to the CCIP in the early 1920s was, for instance, resolutely refused by the men in power. But, as girls from the upper classes got the possibility of qualifying for the educational system of the male elite, in 1924, the Chamber changed its mind and took over the ownership of the female business school. The current chapter addresses the early feminist challenge to the French model of higher

³²⁵ Sanua, Louli (1942/46): 37.

³²⁶ Gardey, Delphine (2001): 160, 286.

³²⁷ Interview with Louli Sanua Milhaud in *Hebdo* (1931, 3 novembre): “La chronique d'hebdo” par Maurice de Waleffe: 3 – 5.

business education, represented by the creation of the HECJF in 1916. The backbone of this project was Sanua's political ambitions on behalf of middle-class women like herself, those left with few means to make a living in a time when marriage – at least for most – was nothing but a misty dream.

War and Gender Trouble

During World War One, France suffered more than most of the other countries that participated. The shortage of food, in particular in urban areas like Paris, made people sick and malnourished, and the war itself took the lives of thousands of husbands and fathers, brothers and friends. Nearly 1 out of every 5 men mobilized did not make it back home, and in sum, this accounted for 10,5 % of the country's active population.³²⁸ And of those who returned to civilian life, the *maladie de la guerre* was widespread, haunting former soldiers at night with war images and horror. The women, in contrast, entered work they had never undertaken before.³²⁹ While some stepped onto the shop floor of the "heavy" war industry, others took up posts in clerical and public offices, commercial and communication services. A few even become mayors, despite their lack of both formal qualifications and rights.

However, the extension of the women's working repertoire did not take place without trouble. People of both sexes disliked the emergence of new gender roles and practices, and some even talked about the war leading to an adverse "masculinization" of women.³³⁰ With the passing of a bourgeois style of clothing to the wearing of more practical and comfortable garments, women looked – needless to say – more and more like men. But, also the long-lasting demographic weaknesses of France became more evident during the war. Apart from a deep imbalance between the male and the female population, the number of newborns decreased rapidly.³³¹ The result was a country of

³²⁸ Weber, Eugen (1994): 11, Smith, Bonnie G. (1989): 398. The trench warfare between the Germans and the French caused the deaths of thousands of men. Approximately 1.3 million died during the war, and more than 3 million were wounded.

³²⁹ Guilbert, Madeleine (1966): 61.

³³⁰ Smith, Bonnie G. (1989): 370.

³³¹ According to Eugen Weber, the number of unborn during the war years was estimated at approximately 1,400,000. Besides, fewer marriages, and fewer children per. married couple, further reinforced this fertility drop. Although the French engaged in family planning both earlier and more extensively than their

elderly and single women, as the historian Eugene Weber has phrased it.³³² After the war, France was full of spinsters, frustrated with their prospects of marriage and motherhood, and widows dressed in “somber-colored hats, gloves, and shoes”.³³³ In 1920, there were 30% more women than men between the ages of 20 and 40. And in 1934, women outnumbered men by more than a million.³³⁴

From early on, French feminists expressed their worries on behalf of the future generation of young middle-class women, left with poor means, skills and education to make a living without having to leave the habits and material standard of their class. Among them was Louli Sanua, a former student of history at the Sorbonne and an eager promoter of professional education for women.³³⁵ During her lifetime, she initiated altogether 7 professional schools for young girls in the Paris region.³³⁶ HECJF was without doubt the most successful of them. Sanua’s idea behind this creation was to provide bourgeois women with concrete possibilities of earning a living on their own. And business administration, she argued, was indeed a suitable working arena for women belonging to the middle classes. Her solution, more precisely was to train them either technically or administratively so they could apply for work in the accounting and calculation services of industry, banking and commercial enterprises, or fill secretarial functions on a higher level within the same business areas. Given the fact that French women had not even gained the right to vote at this time, one might wonder how she managed to realize her idea of a business school for women.

neighbors, couples married between the two wars avoided bearing children more than their parents. 23% of the couples married in the 1930s had no children, and 32% had only one (Eugen Weber 1994: 12).

³³² Ibid.:14.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.: 14.

³³⁵ For more on Louli Sanua as a person and historical figure, see Marielle Delorme-Hoechstetter (1995); (2000).

³³⁶ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1997): VI, (2000): 90. The schools Sanua launched entailed a wide range of issues and professions; teaching, agriculture, rhetoric, modern pedagogy which stressed mixed classes, marketing or publicity techniques, sales methods and preparation courses for HECJF. Their common goal, however, was to prepare and train young women for a professional career. Among them were: École des Gouvernantes (1916), École Technique de Publicité (1919), École Supérieure des Ventes pour les Jeunes Filles (1925), École Moderne (1936), École Agricole pour les Jeunes Filles (1941).

Feminist Politics and Networks during and before the Great War

The business-school entrepreneurs of the late-nineteenth century, like the Siegfried brothers, were all businessmen themselves. This enabled them to draw upon ideological and economic support from various networks. As pointed out in Chapter 3, the Chambers of Commerce were initially the most eager supporters of higher business instruction in France, accompanied by other more independent and private societies of industry. Only exceptionally did local authorities launch commercial schools on their own, which indeed indicates that a group of supportive and resourceful men was decisive for bringing the idea of academic business instruction into action. Louli Sanua, on the other hand, had no such network to rely on, but she was by no means alone. Towards the end of *La Belle Époque*, there were several, if not many, middle-class women of her kind in Paris, working actively for the improvement of women's educational and professional opportunities.

An evident sign of the political concern about women's rights and possibilities, at the turn of last century, were the feminist organizations, which lobbied at state and local levels for social and political reforms. The Conseil National des Femmes Françaises (CNFF), of which Mlle Sanua herself was a member, was set up in 1901 as a kind of umbrella organization for French feminists. Among its chief objectives were improvements in women's working conditions and rights, along with female suffrage.³³⁷ Another sign of the very same consciousness, which was far more easily spread than CNFF's slogans and demands, were the women's career books. These practically-oriented paperbacks, which aimed to help young middle-class girls to choose a suitable "career", were often written by pioneering women. Among the very first was Turquan's *Guide pratique des jeunes gens des deux sexes dans le choix d'une carrière* from 1893, which, interestingly enough, handled boys and girls' professional opportunities in one and the same book.³³⁸ But, at the wake of the Great War, a market for female guidebooks emerged, accompanied by the entry of middle-class women into higher education. The tomes published in the early 1910s addressed, therefore, girls alone. The *Places aux*

³³⁷ Smith, Paul (1996), Stetson, Dorothy McBride (1987).

³³⁸ Referred to in Jean-Alexis Nâret (1953): *Les carrières féminines; écoles, professions, débouchés pour les jeunes filles* (Paris, Lamarre): 3.

femmes! Les Carrières féminines administratives et libérales (1914), was one of them. *Carrières féminines: nouvelles écoles, nouveaux métiers, nouvelle professions* (1917) another, and written by Alice Lamazière and Suzanne Grinberg.³³⁹

The latter woman, Mme Grinberg, was to become an important supporter of Louli Sanua when she was trying to realize her project of a female business school.³⁴⁰ As a lawyer by profession, who would become in time France's first female professor of law, she assisted Sanua with legal issues. In addition, she taught jurisprudence to the pupils at HECJF for years. Her feminist activism hence was very similar to Sanua's, in the sense that she sought to affect women's choices and career opportunities directly. There are, nevertheless, reasons to argue that this kind of activity also deserves the description "political", although it did not necessarily result in any kind of social reforms. The only aspect differentiating it from more traditional forms of politics was its orientation, which compared to the feminist organizations were largely more *horizontal* than *vertical*.³⁴¹ By creating professional schools for women, Sanua addressed young girls directly, and sought through that to improve women's life chances. This was an effective strategy for reaching beyond the public – private split, which so to speak had come to lock (middle-class) women inside the private sphere, ideologically as well as practically, throughout the nineteenth century.³⁴²

To differentiate between these the two kind of activities along lines like conservative and radical feminism, or between club women and government women, as has been done by American feminist historians, seems however to be of little help in

³³⁹BNF: 8-R-27273, MFICHE 8-Z-20144(6). Other examples of the female careers books are: *Guide pratique pour les choix des profession féminines d'après des documents le plus récents*, par Mlle Hélène Bureau, professeur à l'Ecole supérieure Sophie-Germain (Paris, libr. Armad Colin 1921) (BNF: 8-R-30159), *Les Carrières administratives féminines et masculines* par M. Louis Lauliac et Aurèle Gilbert, 1926 – 1926 (BNF: 8-ZPIECE-2535).

³⁴⁰ Smith, Paul (1996): 104.

³⁴¹ Tone M. Birkenes master-thesis ...*ET STILLE TOG, Kvinners frivillige organiserte samfunnsaktivitet i Kristiansand, 1901 – 1907* (University of Bergen, Spring 1995) introduced the distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" political activity, a distinction that I found fruitful in order to understand and explain women's political activity in a time – and in a political system – in which women had no formal power. Birkenes' main point, which I do agree with, is that before women got formal political rights, they relied on various, and often double-edged strategies in order to affect the behavior of others.

³⁴² Habermas, Jürgen (1962/1992), Kocka, Jürgen (1995), Davidoff, Leonore & Cathrine Hall (2001, revised edition).

better understanding Louli Sanua' political project.³⁴³ As a matter of fact, she was politically active in both ways, and in both arenas. On the one hand Sanua was a female politician in the organized and public way, by being a member of various feminist organizations, pushing for social and political reforms. On the other hand, she operated more independently, and through her qualifications and interests – and those of her feminist networks – sought, through direct action, to affect the behavior and life course of other women. This illustrates in a rather good way that her political activism was double edged. One was vertical by going directly to the political world of parliament, government, or local authorities, whereas the other was more horizontal as it targeted a specific social group more practically.

As well as expanding our ideas of political strategies and spaces, feminist activism of this kind shows how closely interrelated public and private activities were in the early-twentieth-century France.³⁴⁴ This raises doubts, once again, about the public – private distinction which underlies much scholarly work on feminism as well as middle-class formation. The demarcation between the public and the private was never complete and total, but served more as an underlying ideal of the bourgeois culture, which – in my opinion – invites one to rethink this as a different kind of politics. By putting voluntary activism and institutional political activity on an equal footing, the study of politics, and especially female-dominated modes of politics, thus involves more than the state or the governmental institutions. It entails the *polity*, as Theda Skocpol wrote in the early 1990s, when she discovered the fruitfulness of gender in the study of American social policies before Roosevelt's New Deal.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Molly Ladd-Taylor (1994), and Seth Koven & Sonya Michel (1993 eds.) are examples of American historians who have described women politics along such lines. For more on this see Eirinn Larsen (1996).

³⁴⁴ The private displays of power are seldom included in mainstream scholars' notion of "politics". Leiv Mjeldheim's definition is, however, wide enough to include any action, private or public, formal or informal, as it simply states that "politics has something to do with distribution of benefits and values within a social system, like organizations, communities, national societies etc." He says besides that the distribution of benefits and values has to be done through identified persons or institutions, and that the decision has to be given room for discernment (*Politiske prossesar og institusjonar* (1987): 11, own translation).

³⁴⁵ Theda Skocpol, among others, has by including the politics of gender in the study of social policy making, arrived at the polity as the primary locus of political action, replacing the state-centered approach of most mainstream political scientists. See Theda Skocpol (1992); (1988 eds.) with M. Weir & A. S. Orloff.

Like in most other countries, French feminists and suffragists were very well connected politically, through either family bonds or friendship. This gave them access to political power in indirect ways, despite being placed outside the formal political system by not having the right to vote. Apart from the members of the CNFF, Sanua's feminist network included about ten strong-headed women. Among the most influential, in terms of access to the political establishment, was the rather conservative but secularly-minded Mme Jules Ferry, the widow of the republican school reformer. Julie Siegfried was another important person for Sanua, a "nineteenth century type" feminist with solid connections within the political elite.³⁴⁶

As acting president for the CNFF during the Great War, Mme Siegfried worked intensively to help find employment for women displaced from the war-zone, work that she was honored for in 1919 by receiving the *Légion d'Honneur* of the French Republic.³⁴⁷ Her interest in – and care for – Sanua's project of starting a business school for women was, therefore, part of a larger commitment or devotion to social issues. In fact, Mme Siegfried, who happened to be married to Jules Siegfried – one of the brains behind the business school of Mulhouse – had a long experience in promoting education for women. Together with her husband, she had herself initiated a female *lycée* in Le Havre in the early 1880s. When moving to Paris, because of her husbands' appointment as Minister of Commerce, she kept up this interest in female education and feminism. Her most common political strategy was "lobbying at home". Through holding a so-called "open house" in accordance with the salon tradition of the French elite, she worked strategically to improve women's conditions. Louli Sanua was often invited to the Siegfried's domicile in rue St. Germaine, which enabled her to meet up and socialize with politicians and public people of various kinds.³⁴⁸ Jules Siegfried, Julie's husband – and later their son André – were to become important spokespersons for Sauna's female

³⁴⁶ Sanua, Louli (1942/46).

³⁴⁷ Smith, Paul (1996): 14, cited in F. Blum & Janet Horne, "Féminisme et Musée Social, 1916 – 1939", *Vie sociale*, 8 – 9 (1988): 331. Officially, this nomination was made on the grounds that she had been "the woman who, throughout the war spoke for all French women, having already dedicated her entire life to works of charity and [social] solidarity"

³⁴⁸ Sanua, Louli (1942/46). Julie Siegfried was one of the eager promoters of the country's first female *lycée*, which opened in her hometown Le Havre, in 1881. But she was also involved when her husband initiated an elementary commercial school for young girls in the same town, the preceding year.

business school, after her request for women's access to HEC had been resolutely refused in spring 1916.³⁴⁹

Nobody knows exactly what the men told Sanua, when she asked for women's permission to enter its male business schools, but a few years later the issue of women's rights resurfaced during a meeting held by the school's administrative council.³⁵⁰ In a report dated the 29th of January 1919, HEC's council stated for the first time that women were not allowed to enter the school. According to the report, there were three major reasons for this. Firstly, female applicants would bring more work for the administration. Actually, the administrative burden was already too heavy, they argued. The presence of the female sex would, therefore, complicate this situation further; "Le présence de jeunes filles compliquerait encore la tâche déjà lourde de l'administration".³⁵¹ Secondly, female students would bring disciplinary problems to the school, the report urged, and last, but not least, fewer boys. To risk losing or excluding male applicants just to give room for the young girls was said to be unreasonable; "il serait illogique de ne pas les admettre pour donner place à des jeunes filles".³⁵² This latter argument was, to a large extent, rooted in HEC's professional ambition.³⁵³ Since women never would – nor could – become business leaders there was, according to the council, no reason to give them access to a school like HEC; "l'enseignement de l'École est destiné à des jeunes gens appelés à devenir des chefs d'entreprises et ne saurait convenir à des jeunes filles qui n'auront jamais à exercer ces fonctions".³⁵⁴ This last reference thus underpins the main argument of this thesis – that the business schools were male (middle-class) constructs, providing no place for women until Sanua came up with the idea to create a female counterpart to the male HEC.

HECJF – A Female Counterpart to HEC?

The formal opening of Sanua's business school took place on the 4th of October 1916, in the center of Paris. The happening gathered, according to Renée De Brimont, two

³⁴⁹ Ibid.: 73.

³⁵⁰ ACCIP, HEC, 38 C 4: Procès Verbaux de séance du conseil, du 29 janvier 1919.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Maffre, Philippe (1983), referred to in Merielle Delorme-Hoechstetter (1995).

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

hundred people, including celebrities of various kinds. “Il y avait là de futures auxiliaires des grandes administration d’Etat, des industrielles, des journalistes, de secrétaires d’ambassade en herbe...”, De Brimont wrote in the preface of Louli Sanua’s memories.³⁵⁵ Evidently, the opening of HECJF was a great event for the Parisian elite. It brought together many people of high importance, according to De Brimont, just as when HEC was inaugurated about forty years earlier. The only visible difference was the gender balance of pupils and relatives. While the ceremony at HEC in 1881 had few – if any – women at all, the majority of the crowd was now female. Also the available resources were strikingly different, since Sanua – unlike the CCIP – had no money to spare on material symbols. Instead, she relied on other people’s generosity and help, and commenced her school, so to speak, in borrowed plumage.

HECJF was first located at the Conservatoire des arts et métiers, a location that had been offered Sanua for free, as its students had been drafted into military service. When the boys later returned from the battlefields, it moved over to the Sorbonne, thanks to contacts with Cécile Kahn, and her husband, Léon Brunschvicg, a well known political writer and a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne.³⁵⁶ One year later, in 1919, HECJF’s one-year-long course was extended with an additional year. However, the money earned through increased school fees was never enough to give it a more permanent location.³⁵⁷ This forced the school’s council to think of future allies, like the university. Sanua, on the other hand, disagreed, arguing for the importance of being independent and self-regulated. Only this, from her perspective, could ensure that the school could adopt in

³⁵⁵ De Brimont, Renée (1946): “Réponse à la dédicace”, in Louli Sanua (1942/46: 3 – 4.

³⁵⁶ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995): 31, Smith, Paul (1996): 23. According to Paul Smith, a historian of French feminism, Cécil Kahn was to dominate the feminist scene in France between the two wars, through, for one thing, her firm leadership of the Union français pour le suffrage (UFSF) and as the editor of the magazine *La Française*. Her major field of interest was the working conditions of women, particularly in factories and she promoted for a long time the idea of formalizing the training of factory inspectors to the Ministry of Labor. Whether this school was ever realized is a bit unclear, but Léon Blum appointed her junior minister to the Minister of Health and Assistance in 1936 – almost a decade before French women got the right to vote

³⁵⁷ ACCIP, HECJF, 13. The school fees were first set to 75 francs per quarter of a year, plus 20 francs for material and 50 francs for the right to pass the exam. However, in the years to come, the price went up, and passed from 150, and 200 to 250 francs in 1924, in addition to 20 francs for material and 80 francs for the right to pass the exam.

accordance with the needs of both business and women, and develop into a true female equivalent to the male HEC.³⁵⁸

The precondition for this ambition was a class-based educational system. Unlike as in Norway, the inherent social dualism of French education, classifying people according to social class as much as gender, survived the democratic reforms of the late 1800s. This made possible the creation of a two-class/sex track also within higher business education: While the elementary commercial schools written about in Chapter 3 taught girls of the lower-middle classes, Sanua aimed at the girls of the bourgeoisie. Renée De Brimont put it,

Elle [Sanua] venait de créer une Ecole de Hautes Etudes Commerciales par les petites bachelières de la bourgeoisie parisienne et sa formule paraissait singulièrement audacieuse: il s'agissait de façonner une équipe intellectuelle féminine adoptée à des temps difficiles et nouveaux.³⁵⁹

Socially, this meant that most of the students were daughters of upper-secondary school teachers, professors, politicians and civil servants etc, groups that are normally categorized as part of the intellectual establishment, not the economic bourgeoisie. Due to Sanua's high social and intellectual ambitions, HECJF was not that different from HEC. Both the entry requirements and syllabus followed the male norm.³⁶⁰ The only courses which signaled the school's true gender were typewriting and stenography, in addition to female (Swedish) gymnastics. Physical exercise was, from Sanua's point of view, essential for a woman preparing for an office career. But, in terms of educational standards, HECJF was aimed without doubt for the girls of the bourgeoisie, who could undertake sufficient training to enter higher business positions. The female students were initially drawn from the Parisian female *lycées*, but, after a few years, recruitment also

³⁵⁸ ACCIP, HECJF I – 2,74 (29).

³⁵⁹ De Brimont, Renée (1946): "Une réponse à la dédicace" in Louli Sanua (1942/46): 3-4.

³⁶⁰ ACCIP, HECJF, I – 2,74 (29). The *bac* or the *brevet supérieur* was the official entry requirement from 1916 to 1948. If the candidate lacked one of these credentials she had to prove an equivalent level of knowledge by taking an entry exam. With the introduction of competitive entry exams (*concours*) in 1948, only students with *bac* were able to apply. The only subject of the "male" commercial syllabus it did not have, was commercial history.

spread to the province.³⁶¹ By the second half of the 1920s, about 40% of the girls were from areas outside the capital, something that made Sanua's business school somewhat more national in its orientation than HEC, which drew mostly upon students from the Parisian area (Ile de France).³⁶² HECJF was granted its first state approval in 1922, and one year later, Sanua received the *diplôme d'honneur de l'enseignement technique*.³⁶³

State authorization, however, involved no financial support. Rising prices and high inflation during and after the war made it also difficult to improve the earnings by escalating the student fees. Sanua's attempt to increase school fees from 75 to 200 francs per trimester in 1920 had, subsequently, little effect. As long as the franc continued loosing its value in relation to both its original gold equivalent and the dollar, increasing prices gave little hope for a more healthy economy.³⁶⁴ The only solution was to sell, but she never offered it to the Sorbonne as the council once recommended. On the contrary, she asked the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) again, which in her opinion had "un patronage moral infiniment autorisé et éventuellement un appui financier".³⁶⁵ However, this time the men of Camber listened carefully. HECJF was now a well-established school, and Sanua a well-respected person. While the majority still hesitated to jump at the offer, it was because the CCIP had created – what they saw as – a similar school, in rue de Naples.

Nous avons déjà une école rue de Naples. On pourrait peut-être élargir ce programme. J'aimerais mieux voir installer une école ménagère qui apprenne aux jeunes filles, aux femmes, leurs devoirs de mères de famille, comment élever leurs enfants, plutôt que d'encourager des intellectuelles qui,

³⁶¹ According to Sanua, she recruited her first group of students by simply sending hand-written letters to some key female *lycées* in Paris, like Racine, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Molière, Fénelon, Durey etc., and the result of her so-called "direct marketing" was remarkable. In the fall of 1916, she had a total of 68 students, which rose to 121 the following year, and 118 the third.

³⁶² ACCIP, HECJF, I – 2,75 (29): Rapport présenté à la commission d'enseignement commerciales par M. Paul Belin, 6. février 1924: Effectifs des élèves, Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (2000): 83.

³⁶³ ACCIP, HECJF, I – 2,74 (29). HECJF was recognized "par arrêté ministériel du 3. janvier 1922". Sanua was from early on recognized by the state official as a person of many resources, and was appointed member of the *Conseil Supérieure de l'Instruction Publique* already in 1920. And five years later, in 1925, she entered the *Conseil Supérieure de l'Enseignement Technique*, the aim of which was to develop and regulate French higher education in engineering and business.

³⁶⁴ Weber, Eugen (1994): 26. From 5.45 to the dollar in January 1919, the franc fell to 12 in January 1920 and to 15.50 the following January. Thereafter, writes, Weber, it continued downhill until it, in the summer 1926, hit its lowest level: a franc, which was worth twenty American cents seven years before, was now exchangeable for four.

à l'heure actuelle, ont à mon avis, dans les écoles supérieures, dans certains milieux, des encouragements qui me paraissent suffisants, du moins pour l'instant.³⁶⁶

As the reference illustrates, the president of the CCIP saw no reason to take on yet another school for women. A school of housekeeping would, in his opinion, be more useful than encouraging women intellectually, as Sanua did with her school. Although the war had come to change the public view on gender, mainly as result of necessity, paid work continued to be perceived as a “second strategy” or choice for women of bourgeois origins. As in Norway, a middle-class woman could conduct wage-earning work as long as she remained unmarried, but once she had a husband and children to look after – the home was considered to be her main duty. By launching HECJF, Sanua had unmistakably pushed the bourgeois’ notion of a “woman’s place and duty” with “l’ambition de former des élites”.³⁶⁷ The Chamber’s new female school, in rue de Naples, shared by no means this feminist ambition.

Multifarious Business: Professional Education for the ‘Second Sex’

CCIP’s female school of commerce, École Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (ECJF), which involved full-time studying for two years, combined professional training with the teaching of household skills.³⁶⁸ A dual aim of this kind implied that it taught a bit of everything. The commercial disciplines were combined with subjects like sewing, nursing, and hygiene and moral and domestic economics, among others. From the CCIP’s point of view, this enabled the girls to undertake elementary office work when needed, while at the same time being prepared for their future life inside the house. Or their “vie d’intérieur”, as the CCIP put it.³⁶⁹ As we have seen, the aim of bridging women’s lives *inside* the house with its *outside*, was also present when the female evening courses were launched in the 1870s. The ECJF hence was in accordance with a well-established

³⁶⁵ ACCIP, lettre de Louli Sanua, 4 mai 1922, cited by Marielle Delorme-Hoechstetter (1995): 81.

³⁶⁶ ACCIP, cited by Frédérique Pigeyre (1986): 105.

³⁶⁷ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (2000): 80.

³⁶⁸ La Chambre de Commerce et d’Industrie de Paris: *Les cahiers de l’histoire* (1999), no. 12 – 13: 5. The duration of the program was three years, with an average of 44 hours a week. The girls were recruited directly from elementary school; the école primaire.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

tradition of commercial female education, institutionalized as early as in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The first attempt to regulate the commercial girls' schools on a national level appeared in 1902, and was thereafter repeated in 1911 and 1916.³⁷⁰ The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued the guidelines, and like most of its creators and owners, it underlined the importance of maintaining a dual emphasis. For the sake of clarity, women's professional necessities and opportunities were to match their duties as the keeper of the house. The Ministry continues:

En arrêtant les horaires et les programmes généraux des Écoles pratiques de jeunes filles, le Conseil supérieure de l'Enseignement technique et l'Administration se sont inspirés de l'objet même de ces établissements qui poursuivent un but bien défini: l'apprentissage d'une profession industrielle, commerciale ou ménagère...D'autre part, l'Administration n'a pas oublié le rôle que toutes femmes est appelée à remplir au foyer, pour assurer le bien-être et la prospérité de la famille.³⁷¹

According to the citation, wage earning could never replace, nor overrule, the fact that women were called to the home, in order to secure the well-being and happiness of the family. HECJF, in contrast, did not communicate such a gendered ideal. Its program said nothing about women's family responsibilities, only that the school's overall aim was to prepare young women "pour l'accès des emplois supérieure dans les administration commerciales, industrielles, bancaires".³⁷² How does this stand in relation to the Norwegian experience?

³⁷⁰ BNF, 8-Z-5353: République Française, Ministère du commerce, de l'industrie, des postes et des télégraphes; Direction de l'enseignement technique (1902): Programme des cours des écoles pratiques de jeunes filles (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale), 8-Z-18434.; République Française Ministère du Commerce et de l'industrie (1911): Programmes des cours des écoles pratique de commerce et d'industrie par les jeunes fille. Programmes provisoires (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale).

³⁷¹ Ibid.: 2. These types of schools offered or represented two different options; one, an industrial section, and the other, commercial. In French the subjects taught were: comptabilité et commerce, exercices pratiques (monographie et bureau commercial), législation commerciale, économie commerciale, géographie, français – correspondance commerciale, langues étrangers, sciences appliquées à l'étude des marchandises, à l'hygiène et à l'économie domestique, calligraphie, sténographie, dactylographie, morale, histoire, dessin, enseignement ménager, études et récréation.

³⁷² ACCIP, HECJF, I – 2,75 (29): Rapport présenté à la commission d'enseignement commerciale par M. Paul Belin, 6. février 1924

By comparing HECJF with the female commercial schools and evening courses run by the French Chambers of commerce and the Norwegian business schools at the same time, one gets the impression that the development of business education for women was somewhat more multifarious in France than in Norway. The creation of HECJF in 1916 made this picture even more diverse. Sanua's notion of gender was radically different from those responsible for the ECJF, or the female evening courses run by the Norwegian business schools, for that matter. By having the individual and cultivated woman as a point of departure, not the future wife and mother, HECJF promoted the notion of women as individual and on an equal level with men.³⁷³ For instance, the first year course "Méthode et expression", for long taught by Sanua herself, aimed at stimulating critical thinking and debate among the girls. It had no established syllabus, but covered current debates within the economic and social domain. The idea was that the ability to think critically, though act individually, was essential in order to qualify the girls for administrative work within the business firm.³⁷⁴ The commercial girls' schools and female evening courses, on the contrary, did not stress women's individuality in this way. Unlike Sanua's HECJF, they highlighted women's collective responsibilities for the family and the firm, confirming the patriarchal culture which created and shaped them. In the face of this ideological difference, the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) suddenly decided to return to Sanua's offer in January 1924, under the condition that she continued as the school's formal director for a minimum of 15 years.³⁷⁵

HECJF under Male Ownership

With the relocation of HECJF in 1924 from Sanua to the CCIP, the Parisian field of higher business education copied the two-sex model being practiced at the lower levels. What made the Parisian Chamber of commerce change its mind is still a bit unclear. The issue was hotly debated in 1922, as was shown above, and many of the members expressed their doubts about including women as students of higher business education.

³⁷³ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995): 64 – 65.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.: 102.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.: 83. The price was 150,000 francs, plus 8,000 francs for additional material, for a school hosting more than 300 students in total.

At the same time, there was a rising consciousness within French society about the importance of education and work for middle-class women, similar to what had already taken place in Norway in the late-nineteenth century. Though, in contrast to the Norwegian path of policy making, and reforming the system of education along lines of social classes as much as gender, France kept up a two-class arrangement. The educational decree of 1924, mentioned in the introduction, contained for this reason only girls of the upper social classes, by ensuring them a place within the educational system of the ruling (male) elite.³⁷⁶

For HEC, which was facing major problems recruiting candidates with the *bac*, gender equality in secondary education represented an evident threat.³⁷⁷ As late as 1910, only 59% of the school's students had passed the *bac*.³⁷⁸ Thus, there was no coincidence that the initiative to include HECJF in the educational portfolio of the CCIP arrives in 1924, and not two years earlier. The conditions under which the Chamber returned to Sanua's offer hence reminds one strongly of what happened in Oslo in 1878 – when the director of the male business school decided to create a female evening course, as a result of women gaining the right to sign up for the “middle-school” exam. In an educational report from February 1924, the CCIP wrote as follows: A l'heure actuelle, l'évolution psychologique de la bourgeoisie en ce qui concerne l'éducation des filles est une chose délicate et perpétuellement en changement, moralement et matériellement”.³⁷⁹

In addition we have to keep in mind that the French business schools, like the Norwegians, operated within a field that was characterized by an uncertain sexual division of labor.

White-collar work underwent, as stated earlier, a rapid feminization during and after the war in France, whereas the more production-oriented jobs, performed by industrial manual workers and technicians, continued to be dominated and defined by

³⁷⁶ Offen, Karen (1982).

³⁷⁷ Meuleau, Marc (1981); 49 – 53. Although there were several attempts to create classes to prepare for the *concours* at HEC before the First World War, none of them managed to survive a very long time, due to fluctuating numbers of candidates. But in 1919, the project was reestablished, and from 1920 onward preparation classes were launched both in Paris and the province. The first two, however, were created at Parisian lycées; Janson de Sailly and Carnot.

³⁷⁸ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 149.

³⁷⁹ ACCIP, HECJF, I – 2, 75 (29): Rapport présenté à la commission d'enseignement commerciale par M. Paul Belin, 6. février 1924.

men. Madeleine Guilbert, a pioneer within the sociology of work, writes that the average number of women working in industry soon returned to the pre-war level after 1918. But for the non-industrial professions, such as clerical work of various kinds, the share of female employees continued to grow after the war. In her book *Les fonctions des femmes dans l'industrie* from 1966, she concludes:

Dans les professions non industrielles, les conséquences de la guerre sont visibles dans le doublement des effectifs féminins pour les services publics et administratifs. Pour les professions industrielles considérées en bloc, le nombre des femmes au travail est sensiblement revenu au niveau de 1906.³⁸⁰

Apart from psychological barriers, dominant ideas of femininity was a simple reason to account for the attraction of commercial work on women. Unlike the heavy mechanized factories, the mercantile sphere was clean and dry. In terms of dressing this enabled the ladies to maintain their femininity and social respectability while still working. As a matter of fact, the working tasks of the administrative office were highly reconcilable with middle-class ideals and values of femininity, whereas the shop floor with its noise, dust and mostly male workers and inspectors were not. This was to maintain the technical professions' masculine outlook and image even though some engineering schools like École Centrale decided to accept female applicants from 1917 onwards.³⁸¹ For HEC, in contrast, women's presence in the upper field could easily mean devaluation and professional degradation.

According to the French historian André Grelon, graduates of business had, by the early 1920s, not yet achieved any "statut professionnel clairement positionné, ni dans la hiérarchie de l'entreprise, ni au sein de la société".³⁸² A HEC degree hence gave no guarantee for enclosure within the French elite, although its official aim was of another kind. In such circumstances, securing – or protecting – the school's masculinity turned

³⁸⁰ Guilbert, Madeleine (1966): 63.

³⁸¹ Little has actually been written about the experience of female engineers at this early stage, but the presentation of Gwladys Chantereau, a doctoral candidate of EHESS, Paris, the 16th of June 2000 was very enlightening for me; "Les femmes ingénieurs issues de l'Ecole centrale des arts et manufactures pendant l'entre deux guerres", Journée d'études d'EHESS: Recherches actuelles sur les écoles d'ingénieurs en France, Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris.

³⁸² Grelon, André (1997): 44.

out to be an important strategy, in addition to the competitive entry exams. The Chamber's decision to buy Sanua's business school in 1924 might, therefore, be interpreted as part of a wider concern or strategy for social and professional recognition. From my reading of the situation, HECJF became a handy vehicle or instrument for institutional mobility and recognition, at a time when the professional and educational field in which HEC operated had undergone a massive feminization.³⁸³

Concluding Remarks

After being rejected by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) in 1916, when she asked for permission for women to join HEC, the feminist Louli Sanau decided to create her own business school, an undertaking strongly supported by the contemporary political elite. But, from 1924 onwards, as French girls of the bourgeois had begun to get a secondary education which had the same content as the men's, this project – the aim of which was to qualify middle-class women for higher administrative work — was also supported and facilitated by the CCIP. Fearing the symbolic devaluation of HEC, as result of a potential feminization, the Chamber decided to take on the ownership of Sanua's business school. As a result, France – and especially Paris – developed a two-sex model of business education also on a higher level. This affirmed institutionally the link between the French business elite and the male sex, while concurrently giving middle-class women the opportunity to undergo a professional training that could qualify them for higher administrative positions within business firms.

Given what has already been said about Norwegian educational policies in Chapter 4, it is hard to imagine a similar development in Norway at this time. The legal changes undertaken in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries democratized the educational system along social class as well as gender. Norwegian women gained, besides this, the right to vote in 1913. To exclude women because of their sex, in the way

³⁸³ French institutions of higher education, including the business schools, experienced a growing number of students in the 1920s, as many of those who had been at the front reentered the educational system after the war. This was, for one thing, visible through the average age of the students, as much as their social backgrounds. The 1920s were, as Marc Meuleau writes, in many ways the time when HEC tried to take up the rivalry with the engineering schools by initiating preparation classes around the country of the kind practiced by the elite schools. HEC continued, nevertheless, to experience fluctuating numbers of applicants, bringing both uncertainty and risk into the school's management.

the French CCIP continued to do, was therefore becoming increasingly difficult in Norway. Legal reforms in favor of women's rights had still few, if any, practical implications on the recruitment of women into higher business studies. Even if the Norwegian business schools moved in the opposite direction to the French in the period 1870 – 1920, by giving women formal access to higher business studies in 1903, they drew on few if any female applicants until the late 1920s. Norwegian women in search of a commercial degree were, instead, channeled towards specific female institutions on an intermediate level, which aimed at turning young girls into secretaries before they got married.

Louli Sanua's creation of the female business school *École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF)*, in contrast, included middle-class women in the upper level of business training. This contributed to the making of a new – and highly modern – understanding of womanhood, wherein marriage and family did not serve as the major point of departure – or arrival, for that matter. Instead, HECJF's object was to train women "d'occuper avec comptétance et efficacité des postes de responsabilités au sein des entreprise".³⁸⁴ By this, Louli Sanua lay the ground for the economically-independent and self-conscious young "flapper": the "new woman", who went across or against the bourgeois notion of the domesticated woman.

³⁸⁴ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995): 31.

Part Two:

Business Education in 'Separate Spheres'; 1930s – 1960s

Les élèves des HEC donnaient en effet une réception en l'honneur de l'équipe de football de la London School of Economics, et y avaient convié les élèves des HECJF. Excellent Idée ! Nous espérons que le boulevard Malesherbes et la rue Mayet continueront à se rapprocher, et nous souhaitons de passer encore de nombreuses soirées aussi réussies sous le signe du Caducée.

*HECJF Student (1936)*¹

CHAPTER SIX

France: The Development of a Two-Sex System in Paris

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has, in his seminal work *La Noblesse d'Etat*, argued that École des Hautes Études Commerciale (HEC) copied the culture of the *grandes écoles* to guarantee the school, and its male graduates, some of the privileges and distinctions enjoyed by the first-ranked engineering schools.² These strategies included such things as the introduction of competitive entry exams to prestigious show banquettes, charity galas and sports-events, which were organized by new and old students. Gender, on the other hand, was not included in the analytical vocabulary of Bourdieu at this stage, even if he did recognize the existence – as well importance – of École de Haute Enseignement Commerciale pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF) in the late 1960s.³ Given the fact that Bourdieu was, throughout his intellectual life, concerned with the study of power, this omission of gender is noteworthy. Actually, the exclusion indicates that also he – like most other students of higher business education – took the two-sex model for granted, thus demonstrating the “invisible” forces that exist within the field; i.e. those of male domination.

¹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 113, avril 1936): 16.

² Bourdieu, Pierre (1989/ 1996): 188 – 201.

This chapter argues that the inclusion of HECJF in the educational portfolio of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP), indirectly helped the inclusion of HEC in the elite-school fraternity. It does so by exploring, as well as comparing, the role of gender in both HEC and HECJF's struggles for social and professional credibility and elite acceptance up to the mid 1960s. It examines, in addition, the interrelation between gender and other institutional processes like content formation and professional orientation. The analysis is accomplished in relation to three distinct but mutually dependent social fields; the international – and especially American – community of graduate business education, the *grandes écoles*, and the business labor market. One of these fields, which contained strong forces of both convergence and divergence, had major impacts on the French business schools' institutional development and policy making, throughout large parts of the twentieth century by.⁴

The chapter moves chronologically from the inter-war period until approximately the mid 1960s. During these years, and especially after World War Two, French society went through tremendous changes. The postwar years, which culminated with an average annual growth rate of 5, 7% between 1955 and the late 1960s, represented the longest growth period in modern time, and was modeled on the American experience of industrial production.⁵ The French admiration of "the American way" was, however, nothing new in the postwar period.⁶ American and "Taylorist" conceptions and methods of industrial management, emphasizing work organization, accounting, budgeting and cost-accounting as managerial tools, had made their way into French industry in the 1920s, legitimated through a discourse of efficiency.⁷ This resulted in a closer connection between the business schools and the enterprises, and so put established school models and pedagogical practices in a critical light.

³ Ibid.: 134; (1987 b): 23, Table: "L'espace des écoles de commerce et de gestion selon les régions du champ du pouvoir". The first – and only – book of Pierre Bourdieu's devoted gender, was issued in 1998: *La domination masculine* (in English translation *Masculine domination*, 2001).

⁴ For a similar argument in relation to the Norwegian field of higher business education, see Ragnhild Kvålshaugen, Agnete Vabø & Eirinn Larsen (2003): 130.

⁵ Lane, Christel (1989): 2. This growth rate was in fact way higher than those in Great Britain and the US in the same period.

⁶ Locke, Robert (1984): 89.

⁷ Kemp, Tom (1972): 55.

Educational Change and Work Efficiency – The Modern Discourse

France was finally to forgo the “old” school system in the early 1920s. As the classicist lost terrain, the male *lycée* was reformed by replacing Latin and the Classics with modern languages, science and mathematics. Paradoxically, this made the new upper-secondary syllabus increasingly similar to the old female program, since the “dead languages” never had had a place in the girls’ schools.

Louli Sanua saw the emerging school reforms as a golden opportunity to improve the rights of women. She made active use of her membership in the Conseil Supérieur de l’Instruction Publique to campaign for educational equality between men and women. During one of its meetings she even claimed that the female program was “supérieur à celui des jeunes gens”, since it already contained the modern sciences.⁸ Thus, the reform could be worked out by simply “copiât sur celui des filles le programme des lycées des garçons”.⁹ Although the head of the educational council was not very receptive to Sanua’s feminist argumentation, the principle of gender equality was officially recognized in 1924 in relation to upper-secondary education. By this, girls could pass the *baccalauréat* (*bac*) without having to take additional lessons in Latin, whereas the boys, in line with the new standards, got an education related to the new industrial age. This would have a profound impact on the Parisian landscape of higher elite education. Efforts to reorganize the educational system during the latter part of the nineteenth century were met with, as we saw in chapter 3, intense debate and resistance within the academic elite. The idea of applied science was negatively perceived – and received – and (reformist) pedagogical principles like “learning by doing” had difficulties in gaining ground within the capital. Yet during the interwar years, things were about to change. Some went as far as to the US, in search for new pedagogical methods and principles.¹⁰

The fabulous performance of American industry in the early 1900s had a major impact on the orientation of French policymakers and businessmen between the two wars. Especially the new industries of metallurgy, engineering and chemical production

⁸ Sanua, Louli (1946): 76.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 149. The elite school students went from being holders of a literary *bac* to specializing in mathematics and science

looked to the US, in the search for innovative and operational management methods.¹¹ But, like other countries which had industrialized early on, France faced great difficulties in modernizing its structures of production, not least the old industrial mentality. Within traditional consumer-goods industries, paternalist values and practices were to a large extent preserved. This made French entrepreneurship old-fashioned and family oriented, on the one hand, and modern and highly vivid, on the other. Actually, the duality between old and new practices, between “Taylorism” and paternalism, was to prove to be fatal for the economic performance of France between the two wars. As has been said by the economic historian Tom Kemp, it signaled a serious underlying weakness, which tended to overshadow the brilliant performance of certain industries like metallurgy and chemical production.¹²

Compared to other industrialized countries of Europe, France was indeed lagging behind in industrial production in the 1920s. This weak comparative functioning of French capitalism made the men of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) take action. In 1928, it sent off a delegation to the US to study the “American business school” more closely, and to bring home new and innovative teaching methods.¹³ But, the CCIP was not alone in exploring new educational grounds. Four years earlier, HECJF’s director – Louli Sanua – had made a similar trip, though her objective was to improve the quality of women’s professional education, not the economic performance of France.

Looking to the US

Arriving in America in November 1924, Sanua went first to Washington to attend the 6th International Women’s Conference as one of the official French delegates. But as soon as the feminist meeting was over, she continued on her own – traveling through large parts

¹¹ Kemp, Tom (1972): 68, Locke, Robert (1984): 90.

¹² Ibid.: 5, 174

¹³ This was not the first time the CCIP had openly admired the Harvard Business School. As early as in 1914, during a meeting of HEC’s council, Harvard was talked about with respect and admiration. Partly because it was the oldest institution of its kind in the “New World”, and partly because it regarded HEC as its only equal in France. “Lorsque l’Université américaine de Harvard, la plus ancienne et le plus célèbre du Nouveau Monde, qui possède une Faculté de Commerce a voulu organiser une échange d’étudiants avec un établissement similaire français, c’est à l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales qu’elle s’est adressée, comme étaient en France le seul établissement d’enseignement commercial supérieure qui lui ... offrit les garanties qu’elle recherchait au point de vue du niveau des études” (ACCIP, 38 C 4: École des hautes

of the East Coast. In about 25 days she visited the universities of Boston, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. The most important contacts were, however, made in Boston and at Harvard, where she was introduced to Taylors' time and motion studies, along with the case study method – the main characteristic of the American business-school model. Harvard Business School, established in the early 1900s, was the first university to make extensive use of case methodology in the teaching of business. Sanua later came to show great admiration for this particular model. In a newspaper interview shortly after her arrival back in France, she described it as a pragmatic and efficient teaching method, related to the analysis of real business problems.¹⁴

On est en particulier frappé de cette forme spéciale d'enseignement 'through cases', pratiquée même dans l'importante Business School de l'Université de Harvard, où l'Ecole se charge de recueillir, en s'adressant au monde des affaires, les problèmes, les 'cas' qui se posent dans les différents services d'une organisation industrielle et commerciale.¹⁵

Another hallmark of the American model was the internship. These practical and "in-house" learning experiences were, according to Sanua, a major strength of the American study program. It fitted, moreover, well with the pedagogical ambition of her female business school. HECJF was thought of as a highly practical school, connected to the activities of the business firm. It highlighted current affairs rather than abstraction and grand theories, and the teaching took place in small classes. When Sanua returned to France in 1925, she therefore decided to make use of American knowledge and teaching methods at HECJF. It took, however, some more time before the school board officially recognized the case-study method. It was not until 1937 that the methodology was applied to a course in sales, marketing and commercial organization for second year's students. The overall point of this method was to train the students' practical business skills and problem-solving abilities, by "familiariser [les] élèves avec les problèmes

études commerciales: Procès-verbaux de séances du conseil : Procès verbal de la séance du samedi 14 mars 1914).

¹⁴ *Le Figaro* (04.09.1925).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995): 109.

d'ensemble et de détail qu'elles auront à résoudre dans les différents domaines de leur activité éventuelle".¹⁶

In addition to familiarizing her students with "Taylorism" and American business school practices, Sanua also spread the "Good News" to the Parisian public. After the trip to the US, HECJF stood as the official organizer of a series of conferences on business-administrative topics. The conferences held at the school's new location in the Latin Quarter; rue Mayet, were very popular. According to Marielle Delorme-Hoechstetter, about 1700 men and 600 women attended the seminar in 1925 – which addressed problems linked to scientific work organization. Rationalization was on the agenda the following year, and cost-analysis the next.

In 1931, the CCIP decided to take charge of the popular conferences of HECJF, linked to Taylor's paradigm of scientific work organization, and then having a female organizer was suddenly thought to be ill-fitting. But, the reorganization did not stop Sanua from being involved in the French rationalization movement. Thomas Cayet, a student of the interwar discourse on scientific work organization in France, has identified Sanua's participation in the movement as both crucial and central,¹⁷ as has Marielle Delorme-Hoechstetter.¹⁸ Sanua actively took part in both national and international meetings held between the two wars, and in 1929 married one of the key actors within the French rationalization movement, Jean Milhaud. In the early 1930s, he created the General Commission of Scientific Organization, a happening that was to benefit HECJF's development.¹⁹ The personal bond between Sanua and the rationalization movement was indispensable for the school's curricular expansion between the two wars, of which the introduction of the case-study method in 1937 was among the most important innovations.

At HEC, on the other hand, the "Harvard method" received little support when the Chamber's delegation returned home. As expected, these men had also become familiar with scientific management and the case study method "over there", but the school's part-time staff was not very interested, and the "Harvard method" had to wait until 1966

¹⁶ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 150, 1948): 10, *Cinquantaire HECJF* (1966): 68, 73 – 75.

¹⁷ See Thomas Cayet (forthcoming: HEC, The European University Institute).

¹⁸ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995).

¹⁹ In French: *Commission Générale d'Organisation Scientifique* (CEGOS).

before being reintroduced. HEC's conservative staff was not the only reason for this delay. As important was the parallel decision within the CCIP to launch a post-graduate business school in 1930 – to be modeled more directly on the American experience. The institute, named Centre de Préparation aux Affaires (CPA), opened in 1931, and made extensive use of American conceptions of business education, while HEC continued to follow the logic and structure of the *grandes écoles*.²⁰

Adapting to the French Model of Elite Education

In terms of strategy, adapting to the elite school model basically meant refining the selection methods, and increasing the number of preparation classes for students getting ready for the status-giving entrance examination. A third year of study was formally introduced in 1939, but the outbreak of World War Two postponed the introduction of the new structure until the late 1940s. In addition, the CCIP decided to give extra points to boys that had passed the *bac* one year ahead of schedule, i.e. at the age of 16, a policy practiced at several elite schools. Through these adjustments, HEC became even more similar to engineering schools like École Centrale and Polytechnique (X), though it was never of equal status. The old saying that youngsters attending the business schools were less gifted than those preparing for the engineering school, was still alive. As late as in 1954, the *HECJF Bulletin* acknowledged the following:

Il est de tradition, dans les familles comme dans les lycées et collèges, de pousser les bons élèves vers les Grandes Écoles d'Ingénieurs, tandis qu'on destine au commerce les moins bons élèves... et les fils de famille qui n'ont pas réussi dans leurs études.²¹

The tradition was clear. The most intelligent students normally headed for the elite schools of engineering, while HEC recruited the less good ones, most often from well-off families who were short of intellectual success.

The preparation classes which were established by HEC in the 1930s lacked the scientific ambition of the ones leading towards the *grandes écoles* of engineering. Unlike the *classes prépa scientifiques* (from 1934 of two years duration), there was no

²⁰ Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle (1996): 5 – 6.

disciplinary link between the one-year business school preparation and *concours*, and HEC's actual program.²² The commercial "disciplines" were, for example, not part of the entrance test in the way the modern sciences dominated the *concours* for the technical schools. Consequently, the entry exams became for HEC solely an instrument for getting its hands on the best – or brightest – students "among the worst". Fighting its low social standing, candidates with work experience were, for instance, not invited to apply at HEC unless they managed to fulfill the theoretical requirements. This strategy had a positive effect on the social reputation of HEC. Although it continued to be perceived as a "second choice" to the best engineering schools, the number of applicants increased, a growing proportion of which were sons of the upper-middle class. Marc Meuleau, the official historian of HEC, argues that the most predominant change between the 1920s and the late 1960s was the increase of students with fathers working either in the liberal professions or as *cadres*, indicating that the business schools had become more attractive in the higher social classes.²³ From having almost no students from these two groups before World War Two, 30% of the students reported these as their fathers' occupation in 1968.²⁴ The share of *cadres supérieurs* was in particular expansive, whereas the number of students from the private business communities, defined as sons of business owners, was in decline. Nonetheless, the status difference between the best engineering schools and HEC was still substantial.

Hence, many of HEC graduates continued to enroll at the Faculty of law as before. And in contrast to the graduates in engineering, they seldom made it into manufacturing and production management.²⁵ Finding work within the commercial and financial sector was more common among HEC graduates during these years, although a few managed to climb the administrative hierarchy in some of the new production areas. According to Robert Locke, the chemical, electrical and automobile industries had a few

²¹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 170, 1954): 8.

²² Between 1922 and 1958, the entrance exams consisted of written and oral examinations in Mathematics, French composition, foreign languages, History and Geography, Physics and Chemistry.

²³ Meuleau, Marc (1981): 117, Lebaron, Frédéric (1997): 83. Ten years later, in 1978, sons of *cadres* had grown to 46%.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 139.

²⁵ To recruit industrial leaders was, however, HEC's official aim, and the reason it decided to offer a third-year specialization in "business and industry" in the 1920s. The two other specializations were "banking and finance" and "colonial affairs".

HEC graduates in rather high positions by 1945.²⁶ But once again, before the 1970s, this was more the exception that proved the rule than a general trend.²⁷ Of course, the gradual inclusion of HEC in the *grandes école* fraternity strengthened the business graduates' labor market position to some respect. Being an *ancien élève* of HEC was indeed a good starting point, but never enough to climb the managerial hierarchy to the top, even if the alumni did what they could to make it happen. Expressed in Bourdieusian terms, they sought to accumulate symbolic capital by reproducing as well as establishing explicit connections between themselves and what they – and others – considered to be “the elite”. To be more precise, the strategy was to arrange galas and sport contests with other elite institutions, as well as maintaining a close relationship to the French – and especially Parisian – business community. The *Boom HEC*, which in short can be compared to a large grocery market in which the graduates are the vegetables, and the firms are the customers, is still an annual event. So is the “Triangulaire”, where students of HEC, X and Centrale compete against each other in various team sports. Most of these social events, initiated during the 1930s, in order to become part of the symbolic system of the elite, still exist.²⁸ This indicates that “extra-curricular” arrangements have given important symbolic affirmation to HEC.

Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the symbolic capital accumulated by HEC from the inter-war period until the mid 1960s, was linked to its steady commitment to the masculine, competitive, selective and highly snobbish culture of the *grandes écoles*. In other words, it was structural and cultural adjustments, and not curricular or American credentials, that made HEC's inclusion in the elite school fraternity possible. In regard to this culture, HEC's primary function was to screen and cultivate suitable male graduates for the business community. Its role as knowledge producer was secondary.²⁹

The educational authorities acknowledged HEC's elite position in 1950, by providing its graduates the right to compete for admission at École Nationale

²⁶ Meuleau, Marc (1981), Locke, Robert (1984): 247.

²⁷ See chapter 1.

²⁸ During my half-year long stay at HEC in 1999, the student newspaper kept returning to the *Boom* and the *Triangulaire*, as if they were far more important than all the seminars and exams together.

²⁹ Larsen, Eirinn (2003): 175.

d'Administration (ENA).³⁰ However, it never challenged the institutional and professional superiority of the engineering schools. Apart from their longer history and tradition, this was due to the fact that the relatively strict division of labor, characteristic of the industrial society, also supported the divide between the two types of professional education. While the engineering schools prepared their students for industry and production, HEC primarily served the service sectors, wherein transaction and administration, not production, were the common work-ingredients. There was a pronounced difference of prestige between these two fields, however; between business administration and industrial production. Besides, the commercial sectors attracted far more female employees than the industrial hierarchies. Masculinity, as a source of power, was hence of continuous importance for HEC. The two-sex model helped to secure this, by institutionalizing the notion of the clerical man and woman as different, but complementary, work identities.

There was still nothing in this arrangement that prevented HECJF from copying HEC's more institutional strategies, with the aim of increasing its own symbolic status. The *concours* was one of these.

Following the Boys

Competitive entry exams were made compulsory in rue Mayet in 1930. "Depuis 1930, j'ai du établir un barrage, une sélection. On n'entre plus qu'au concours" Louli Sanua explained to a journalist in 1933.³¹ This policy rested on the idea that selectivity was a key to increased quality, which later could amplify the school's social and professional prestige; but how competitive was HECJF actually? In 1941, more than a decade after Sanua made use of entrance exams for the very first time, 153 girls did the *concours*, competing for 100 vacancies.³² In the following decade, the selectivity increased. In 1956, for instance, there were as many as 385 applicants for HECJF's now three-year-long study program, while the number of places were about the same as fifteen years earlier.³³ In 1968 the ratio between applicants and those admitted had increased even

³⁰ Durain, Romain (1995): 88 – 91.

³¹ *Hebdo*: "La chronique d'hebdo" by Maurice de Waleffe (03.11.1933): 3-5.

³² *Bulletin HECJF* (No. 2, 1941): 6.

³³ See Appendix 11, Table I and Appendix 14.

more. That year, the school received about 600 requests, indicating that only the very best were accepted. HECJF remained, however, much less competitive than HEC.³⁴

Still, one might argue that the competitive entrance exams had strong symbolical advantages for HECJF. In addition to heightening the intellectual quality of the students, by which an elite school status could be granted, it provided the students with a sense of collective identity. An *esprit de corps* as it is called in French, based on the social mechanisms of inclusion – exclusion which are created when limiting the places available for admission.

Sanua's decision to make use of the *concours*, and later the *prepa*, indicates that she too was influenced and shaped by the French elite-school tradition or mentality.³⁵ But unlike her male superior, she had not the engineering schools in mind as an ideal when making competitive entrance exams compulsory for admission, but HEC itself. It was the CCIP's own crown jewel that stood as the model for HECJF institutional or structural strategies, not the prestigious *grandes écoles* of engineering. This had a major impact on the policies employed by both Sanua and the *anciennes élèves* in order to gain social and professional recognition for both HECJF and its graduates. A thorough reading of the *HECJF Bulletin* displays, moreover, that the female school community reproduced the elite school culture of HEC. The annual ball was an example of this, to which prominent politicians and business people were invited. Another social happening was the winter excursion to the French Alps, while a third was the yearly motor rally. Sport was in fact one of HECJF's main qualities – a quality which had a gendered explanation.

Right from the start, Sanua insisted on making sport a compulsory subject at HECJF. The importance of physical exercise could, according to her, never be overestimated. It had a liberating, strengthening, and refreshing effect on the girls who were preparing for a business career. This awareness commenced, as we saw in the previous chapter, with something called Swedish (Line) gymnastics in the 1920s. This

³⁴ See Appendix 11, Table II. Even though the ratio between those who applied and those accepted was more or less the same during the Vichy, it rose rapidly after the war. In 1956, HEC received as many as 1,134 applications for its 250 vacancies, while CCIP's "second" business school – the ESCP – had 956 registered for 298 places. And in the late 1960s the ratio rose to something like 2,200 – 250.

³⁵ The *prepa* was not made compulsory at HECJF until the early 1960s, but about 50% of the students who were accepted in 1956 had undergone a one-year preparation class before admission (ACCIP, I – 2, 74 (4): *Situation des écoles de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris*, 1er décembre 1956: tableaux 5 – 6).

version of gymnastics combined the romantic ideal of physical development with military discipline, though they were also combined – as Rune Slagstad has pointed out – with a scientific modernism.³⁶ The bodily movements were kept under strict control, and every repositioning had to be done in accordance with a predetermined plan set by the teachers.

After World War Two, the girls at HECJF branched into new sports. Swimming, fencing, riding, sculling and, not to be forgotten, volleyball, tennis and hockey, were popular games among the pupils. Competitions with candidates from other elite schools were also arranged, just as HEC did when meeting graduates of X and Centrale for soccer and rugby matches, or rowing competitions on the Seine, imitating the cultural rituals of dignified institutions like Oxford and Cambridge. HECJF, in contrast, competed with schools of its “own kind”, i.e. the female schools, such as ENS Sèvres and ENSET.³⁷ By intermingling with youth from the most prestigious schools and families, these events contributed powerfully in the construction of an *esprit des élites*. For the girls, the sports events had an additional advantage, as the variety of games went far beyond conventional standards of femininity. Hockey, fencing and rallies had, for example, rather masculine overtones, whereas gymnastics was considered a traditional women’s sport. Through sports, the female candidates could, therefore, practice a wider range of gender roles than most other women at the time.

The economic recession of the 1930s, followed by the post-war reconstruction, also restored, to a large extent, the bourgeois family ideal in France. For many middle-class women, this represented another escape into the private sphere. Women’s participation in the official workforce began to decline, though not as much as in other European countries. The policy attempts to limit wage work among French women were never as many nor as successful as, for example, in Norway. The changes undertaken first and foremost concerned women’s pensions and the cash benefit system for female functionaries in need of housemaids. The first decree, passed the 17th of July 1935, declared that it was forbidden to increase the pension of retired women, and that widows had no right to receive anything but the pension of their husbands despite having built up

³⁶ Slagstad, Rune (2004): 43.

³⁷ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 193, 1960): 5. ENSET = École Normale Supérieure de l’Enseignement Technique.

their own pensions points.³⁸ The country's weak population growth was the mainly reason for welfare cuts of this kind. The political efforts to restrict paid-work among French women during the 1930s came about, therefore, not as a result of rising unemployment among men, as was the case in Norway, but because of a increasing anxiety about the low number of newborns, and thus France's "future". The domesticated woman, resting *au foyer*, was still the dominant ideal for most French women in the early postwar period.

Among graduates of HECJF, in contrast, this ideal was met with less sympathy.³⁹

By insisting on married women's right to employment, the female business graduates took an explicit position against the discourses of the "prenatal movement" of the inter-war and early postwar years.⁴⁰ Political statements like: "Si vous laissez la femme travailler, la France mourra faute d'enfants" and "En poussant les filles vers l'atelier, le bureau, l'usine, le laboratoire, vous les détourne du mariage", were hotly debated and criticized.⁴¹ The point of view of traditionalists and "prenatalists" that mothering and working were irreconcilable activities, met with resistance within the community of HECJF. In 1936, a HECJF *camarade* proclaimed: "Il n'existe nul document qui établisse de façon précise les rapports entre l'activité professionnelle de la mère et le nombre d'enfants qu'elle met au monde".⁴² Hence, reducing married women's possibilities of working, in the belief that it would increase the number of children being born, was unreasonable, the alumni argued.

Another topic of interest in the early postwar years, was the increasing participation in part-time work by women.⁴³ HECJF's alumni association, whose primary aim was to run a placement office, refused to arrange part-time positions. "Ce sont en réalité des emplois de petits secrétaires que ne peuvent pas intéresser les HECJF", they argued.⁴⁴ In fact, work arrangements of this kind were directly damaging for the school's graduates, as it broke with the natural rhythm of the business enterprise; "elle ne peut

³⁸ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 114 1936): 7 – 8.

³⁹ For more on the interrelation between gender and body politics in France from 1900 to 1945, see Elisabeth Elgán (1994).

⁴⁰ *Bulletin HECJF* (No. 197, 1961): 3 – 8; (No. 95, 1934); (No. 153 & 156, 1949); (No. 206, 1963).

⁴¹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 151, 1948): 1.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 172, 1955).

faire ‘carrière’ dans un emploi à mi-temps”.⁴⁵ Reduced working hours for female employees was therefore perceived as only having negative effects on women’s working possibilities. It was, in the words of the HECJF community, not reconcilable with claiming or conducting responsibilities within a firm.

Other members opposed part-time work for more “selfish” reasons, however.⁴⁶ A female business graduate answered, for instance, in the following manner when she was asked why she – as a married women and mother – worked full time:

Mais j’en besoin. Et puis tout de même je suis plus à ma place, m’occupant de ma maison d’éditions que frottant les parquets. Je m’empresse de dire que toutes les femmes ont mieux à faire que de frotte les parquets.⁴⁷

The moral in this statement is clear-cut; to be professional active, running her own publishing house, was much better than being at home – “scrubbing the floors” (*frotte les parquets*). Another woman – though unmarried – explained her attempt to reconcile wage work and housework as follows.

Avec une femme du ménage trois fois par semaine; douze heures par les trois jours. Le dimanche, je mets le linge à tremper. Le lundi la femme de ménage le lave (sauf les draps) et entretient l’appartement. Le mercredi, elle repasse, fait le ménage, la vaisselle, etc. Le vendredi est le jour du ménage à fond....Et la cuisine? J’essaie de simplifier.⁴⁸

The community of HECJF represented everything but the norm of gendered behavior in postwar France. Aside from being part of the educated elite, they behaved in a superior way. They acted as if they felt themselves to be above other women; housewives and full-time mothers, “low-level” secretaries and part time office-workers. This kind of attitude and behavior shows, in my opinion, that the female business graduates of HECJF, through their institutional belonging and socialization, had access to a relatively broad gender repertoire and identities: a repertoire that could be stretched out

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 151, 1948): 1.

⁴⁶ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 109, 1936).

⁴⁷ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 156, 1949): 5 – 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

or narrowed down, according to the actual situation and need, but which most of all was used to disassociate themselves from the ordinary (office) women in order to increase their own social and professional value. This made HECJF's female graduates more similar to the male business graduates of HEC than other female employees, although they for sure also belonged to an educational system of gender complementarity, not equality.

The Two-Sex Model – A Parisian Phenomenon

There was a gradual social rapprochement or identification between the male and the female business graduates of HEC and HECJF, respectively, in the period 1930s – 1960s: The young ladies attending HECJF were, for instance, often invited to parties and galas at HEC. One example is found in 1936, when the students in boulevard Malesherbes held a reception on the occasion of a soccer match against the lads of the London School of Economics (LSE). The female students thought this was an excellent idea, and after the party one of them wrote the following in the *HECJF Bulletin*:

Les élèves des HEC donnaient en effet une réception en l'honneur de l'équipe de football de la London School of Economics, et y avaient convié les élèves des HECJF. Excellent Idée! Nous espérons que le boulevard Malesherbes et la rue Mayet continueront à se rapprocher, et nous souhaitons de passer encore de nombreuses soirées aussi réussies sous le signe du Caducée.⁴⁹

By including the girls in the elite school, the values of masculinity and brotherhood, which HEC depended on, were almost confirmed through its diametrical, though symbolically inferior, opposite, i.e. the femininity and sisterhood of HECJF. Thus, to interpret the collegiate atmosphere between the business grads of different sex as a sign of gender equality seems inaccurate. The two-sex model signified, as stated above, gender complementary, not equality, wherein men were positioned hierarchically above women. In accordance with this model, men and women were thought of as having different, yet matching social roles within the business (school) as in society at large,

⁴⁹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 113, 1936): 16.

even though many of the female candidates adapted to the norms and values of their male colleges, with the hope of professional advancement.

Sanua and her successor Mme Ginèbre adapted a similar strategy on behalf of HECJF as a learning community. Wanting to raise the school's intellectual standing to the level of HEC, the study program was extended to three years in 1948. On year later, Ginèbre declared proudly that the program now was "équivalent à celui des grandes Écoles masculines de même nature!".⁵⁰ One might of course wonder to what extent the boys shared this view of the female program. However, it seems evident that HECJF gained considerable value after extending the program from two to three years. The public authorities put them at least on equal footing with HEC in terms of admission to École Nationale d'Administration (ENA), which educated high-level civil servants for the new and liberated France.⁵¹ By this, HECJF was included in the elite school fraternity even officially, and unlike the female counterpart to X, the Ecole Polytechnique Féminine, HECJF became a strong second to HEC in the postwar period.⁵² As a matter of fact, its program and pedagogy was unique.

The institutional contact between the business schools and ENA; the new *Grande grande école* of France, was a weak one for a long time. This was in part due to a large cultural gap between the state administration and the small and medium-sized business enterprises that the business schools recruited for, but also because ENA initially gave no priority to commercial and economical knowledge in the *concours*.⁵³ Most of the

⁵⁰ AN, CSP 770471 ART 12: Concours d'Admission; Ministère de l'éducation Nationale/ Direction de l'Enseignement Technique, Naret, Jean-Alexis (1953): 79, Haas, Pierre Henri (1993): 217.

The ESCs underwent various reforms in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1964 they changed their official name from "écoles supérieures de commerce" to "écoles supérieures de commerce et d'administration des entreprises" (ESCAE). A third year of study was, for example, introduced in 1950, but *bac* and entrance exams were not made compulsory until the mid 1960s

⁵¹ *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (09.02.1950), *Bulletin HECJF* (No. 157, 1950): 14. This took place in 1950, and thus the same year as for students of HEC.

⁵² Pigeyre, Frédérique (1986).

⁵³ Bourdieu, Pierre (1989/1996): 202. HEC graduates did not prepare for ENA in large numbers until the late 1960s and early 1970s. This had probably to do with the changing ideological climate in the 1960s. HEC developed a relatively strong left-wing opposition in its ranks in the latter half of the 1960s, and many of its students were to sympathize with the revolts of May 68. Some also joined or established Trotskyist groups. Within this mindset, the business schools stood forward as the ultimate symbol of the capitalist society, whereas ENA, which educated students for the public sectors, was thought of in a better way. However, the growing tendency among business school graduates to prepare for a school, the primary aim of which was to make bureaucrats and not businessmen, cannot be explained by ideological changes only, or the existence of strong state involvement in French industry and business. As both Bourdieu and Gaillard

candidates entering ENA in this early period were graduates of Science Po, École Normale Supérieure (ENS) or one of the many engineering schools. The business graduates did not, therefore, fully profit from the privilege it was to be able to register for ENA's prestigious *concours*. And, with regard to the female candidates, there was never the intention to "ouvrir bien des portes", as the president of the *anciennes élèves* hoped in 1949.⁵⁴ ENA never became the democratic corrective its "father", Michel Debré, had intended. The percentage of women passing the school's entrance exams was, for long time, very low. On the other hand, it helped HECJF to keep the regional business schools at distance, at least academically.⁵⁵

During the early postwar years, the regional business schools continued to be situated somewhere between the field of secondary and higher education. Many of the regional institutions did not require, for example, the *bac*, and the level of the pupils was considerable poorer than those at HEC and HECJF. It was, however, evident that schools of powerful and prosperous chambers were positioned above those of less wealthy ones. The École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP) was always ranked far above the business schools of small regional towns, as a result of its long history, institutional foundation in the CCIP, and geographical location in the capital. Additionally, it had an all-male clientele like HEC. This set the country's oldest business school apart from the provincial branches of learning, which all came to introduce mixed classes after 1945.

have noticed, this shift signaled also a tendency of rising inflation in educational degrees and symbols by the end of the postwar period. As higher education was no longer in the hands of the few, the symbolic power of diplomas was running down. From 1946 to 1968, the number of secondary students tripled in France, while university enrollment rose from 129,000 to 540,000 students in the same period and the elite schools had 89,000 students altogether. The practice of preparing for several degrees and diplomas simultaneously or for one after another – which was the case for HEC students preparing for ENA – was therefore a consequence of a devaluation of higher education. It became, so to speak, a strategy for social and professional recognition, within a social landscape where "everybody" had become middle class, and higher education was democratized along lines of both class and gender.

⁵⁴ HECJF Bulletin (No. 158, 1950): 8.

⁵⁵ HECJF Bulletin (No. 154, 1949): 11. No more than 15 female candidates successfully managed to enter in the first eight years. For the period 1945 – 1990, only 11% of ENA's total graduates were women, and in 1995 the school had still barely 20% female students. The non-technical *Grands Corps* that the school selects, often used as a springboard to high-level positions in the private sectors (*pantouflage*) – have therefore always been overly male. The first year a woman was classified as best during the fatal "classement de sortie", which decides the *énarques* future working possibilities, was in 1969. And according to the sociologists Michel Bauer and Bénédicte Bertin-Mourot, women have so far made up only 5% of those transferring to high-level business positions afterwards, i.e. *les pantouflages*. For more on this see Jean-Alexis Naret (1953), Jean-Michel Gaillard (1995), Michel Bauer & Bénédicte Bertin-Mourot (1997 a & b).

24,7% of the student body of the business school of Lyon were girls in the academic year 1948 – 49.⁵⁶ And at the ESC of Rouen, there between 10 and 20% were female students in the 1950s and the 1960s, although the feminization had already started in the late 1920s.⁵⁷ When a business class from Rouen visited the commercial-high school of Oslo (OHG) in 1956, the city paper *Morgenbladet* reported that it had a total of 6 girls and 18 boys.⁵⁸ In Paris, in contrast, the gender structure continued as it always had been.⁵⁹ The business schools of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce were accessible for boys only, while HECJF was designated for daughters of the elite.

High fees had once been used at HEC as a way of keeping the lower social classes from entering. Particularly in the beginning, this strategy was explicit. Louli Sanua, and her successors, used the same tactic, but with other thoughts in mind. In addition to a need for a firm financial return, since the school received no public funding, fees were also a question of achieving equality with the male schools for Sanua.⁶⁰ In her opinion, it was the only way to set her school apart from the commercial girls' schools, and it was indeed a structural necessity in order to be considered part of the higher, and not lower, level business programs, dominated and run by men. "Seulement, avec ça, on n'est plus

⁵⁶ Haas, Pierre-Henri (1993): 217.

⁵⁷ Scieb, Pierre-Alain (1991): 74, 76. Concerning the period 1960 – 2002 see Appendix 4, Table II. Most of the engineering schools established before World War One introduced mixed classes during or just after the war. Among those were: École Supérieure d'Electricité (1894 / mixed classes from 1919), École Normale Supérieure de Chimie de Paris (1896 / mixed classes from 1919), INA de Paris (1876 / mixed classes from 1920), École Centrale (1829 / mixed classes from 1917/1918), École Supérieure de Physique et Chimie Industrielle de Paris (1882 / mixed classes from 1922), École Normale Supérieure de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace (1909 / mixed classes in 1924). The engineering schools that continued keeping women out were: ENSA Grignon (1826 / mixed classes from 1942), ENS de Ponts et Chaussées (1747 / mixed classes from 1962), Institut de Nord (1854 / Mixed classes from 1965), ENS des mines de Paris (1783 / mixed classes from 1969), École Polytechnique (1794) / mixed classes from 1972, École de l'Air de Salon-de-Provence (1933 / mixed classes from 1978). Almost all the engineering schools created after 1917 had mixed classes from the beginning (see *La place des filles dans une filière de formation des cadres. Du lycée aux grandes écoles scientifique* (1997): 23, *Hommes et commerce* (1971) No. 117 : 61).

⁵⁸ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Morgenbladet* (10.07 1956).

⁵⁹ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): *Situation des écoles de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris* (1er décembre 1956). This report states that among the graduates of the regional business schools, girls make up "au peu plus de 20 % de l'effectif total" (: XVI). From the ESCs, including the one of Paris, a total of 528 students graduated in 1956, of which 114 were women. The feminization of the ESCs is also confirmed in AN, coté 900502, CPS 770471, art 13: concours d'admission aux Écoles Supérieures de commerce, 1er sessions 1960.

⁶⁰ *Hebdo*, "La chronique d'hebdo" by Maurice de Waleffe, (03.11.1933): 3 – 5. The requirement of such fees still tends to differentiate the students of the French business schools from those attending the state-owned engineering schools, where, in the most prestigious ones like X, the students even got paid. The

une sténodactylo. On est l'égale d'un homme", she said in 1933.⁶¹ This statement illustrates rather clearly that HEC and HECJF had overlapping, though distinct, social battles to fight. Whereas HEC originally employed high fees, and later competitive entrance exams, to improve its social standing amongst the elite, HECJF used these to communicate their equality with the male schools and elite, but institutional superiority to the female clerks with no formal higher education. Only this made sure they were regarded a "man's equal", as Sanua argued. Thus, gender had an explicit role in HECJF's struggle for recognition within the sphere of higher business education, while HEC could give more priority to social class, due to the two-sex model. This was initially done, as we saw in chapter 3, to assert predominance over the other business schools, some of which were older, and thus secure its inclusion in the *grandes écoles* fraternity, which apart from substantial selection procedures, depended on the social capital of the families who frequented the school.

HEC's emphasis on social class does not reduce gender as an important source of power. Chapter 5 focused on how HEC's fragile masculinity asserted itself in a self-defensive way when it was challenged by feminists during and after the Great War. But, with the creation of the two-sex model in 1924 – after the inclusion of HECJF in the educational portfolio of the CCIP – the management of HEC had no reason to make use of gender strategically. Due to the new structure of the Parisian field of higher business education, women and men's respective places had been institutionalized according to the gender culture of the business firm – a culture which HECJF also helped to maintain through its second-year specialization in secretarial work.⁶²

school fees at HECJF continued to be high, though slightly lower than at HEC (ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): *Situation des écoles de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris* (1er décembre 1956).

⁶¹ Ibid. Of course, this was offset by scholarships. The archives of both HEC and HECJF contain quite a few requests from parents and relatives asking for financial aid to pay the school fees (ACCIP, 38 C 4: *École des hautes études commerciales; Procès-verbaux de séances du conseil* ; I – 2,75 (31): letter to HECJF dated 22. 02. 1934. In 1956, HEC had 224 students on scholarship, HECJF 100, and the ESCP 153.

⁶² In addition to HECJF, the CCIP created a one-year-long secretary course for young women, reinforcing the two-sex model already existing on a lower level; Centre de préparation supérieure au secrétariat (CPSS) in 1950. It was initially made "pour offrir une possibilité de formation professionnelle aux jeunes fille non admises à HECJF" (ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): *Rapport d'orientation de l'œuvre d'enseignement de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris* (1969): Chapter: "Enseignement commercial supérieur").

Secretarial Work (tried) Reevaluated

HECJF was, as we have seen, launched at a time when the female secretary was increasingly replacing the male. In the late 1800s, secretarial work had been a fairly well-regarded occupation, but with its feminization after the Great War, this changed considerably. Women's entrance into the occupation had, in other words, "damaged" – or devaluated – both the title "secretary" and the kind of office work carried out by secretaries like bookkeeping, filing and typewriting.

Louli Sanua seems to have been conscious of the ongoing social devaluation of secretarial work when she developed her female business school in the early 1920s. But the feminization was, in her eyes, not only negative. It could also be used strategically to give women a professional identity, and thus a place of their own within the business community. Sanua accepted therefore the notion of the female secretary, and used it explicitly to set up a rivalry with male functionaries. For this to happen, women needed specific training. In a booklet from 1921, the second-year specialization in secretarial work is unambiguously stated to be something based on specific skills and knowledge.

Ce cours est destiné à préparer les jeunes filles aux postes de secrétaires, postes qui, malgré l'opinion courante, demandent une préparation spéciale. Une secrétaire doit connaître le maniement des fiches et l'organisation des dossiers, être au courant des procédés de documentation, rédiger un rapport pour le présenter oralement etc. Cet ensemble de connaissances pratiques, reposant sur une forte culture générale, permet aux élèves de devenir les interprètes fidèles de la pensée du chef...⁶³

As this indicates, HECJF's specialization in secretarial work was strikingly conventional. Its primary aim was to make loyal secretaries out of women. The job required, however, a set of knowledge, and I will argue that it was this underlying attempt that made HECJF unique – and rather different – from the other secretarial courses existing at the time. Sanua wanted to provide the secretary with a professional identity and knowledge base, with the aim of amplifying her professional status. Put differently, her attempt was to "go up-market" and make the underlying definition of secretarial work

⁶³ ACCIP, I – 2,75 (29).

more precise and advanced. The specialization's explicit goal was to form the director's right-hand woman – his confident and joint partner, so to speak, because secretaries like this were, according to Sanua, indispensable for a well-functioning business enterprise. HECJF's syllabus had, therefore, to move far beyond typewriting and stenography, lessons that in the eyes of Sanua taught nothing but practical – and thus inferior – skills. A critical spirit and a solid work methodology were far more important than words per minute.⁶⁴ The same went for the vast *culture générale*. Only this would enable the female graduate to follow the mind and will of her (male) boss, but why were women thought to be better suited for activities of this kind than men?

When Sanua was confronted with this question in 1933, during an interview with the weekly press, she answered the following:

Le secrétaire masculin est ambitieux, il ronge son frein, il rêve de devenir patron. Être la seconde ne lui suffit plus. Il voudrait le premier rang. La femme est plus sage. Elle expose sans réserve l'intérêt de la maison qu'elle fait marcher. Au bout du compte, le secrétaire-homme s'en ira ou sera congédié. La secrétaire-femme demeure!⁶⁵

The male clerks tend to be more ambitious, Sanua explained. They want to become the leader, *le patron*, whereas a woman is more wise and careful. Women have lower ambitions, and are essentially more loyal to the employer and the firm than the male employees. Female secretaries tend for this reason to stay longer, while the man runs off or is asked to leave.

One underlying and highly interesting aspect of this answer, is Sanua's modesty – or consciousness – when she speaks of the female secretary. She does not yield to the temptation of celebrating women's secretarial skills in an essentialist way. Her explanations of the gender differences, indispensable for a well-functioning office, are psychologically or culturally flavored. This is particularly visible when she states that women "expose sans réserve l'intérêt de la maison qu'elle fait marcher", which indicates that a woman is socialized to hold back, even though the credit for a well-functioning

⁶⁴ Delorme-Hoechstetter, Marielle (1995); (1997).

⁶⁵ *Hebdo*, "La chronique d'hebdo" by Maurice de Waleffe, (03.11.1933): 3 – 5.

firm is hers. A man, on the other hand, does not have this quality of modesty. He “eats his brakes” (“il ronge son frein”), Sanua argued, in his wish to become the boss.⁶⁶

In this way, the gender differences of the modern office were given a socio-cultural basis or interpretation. The woman was superior to the male secretary because of her social training and psyche, not because of biology or physiognomy. A view of this kind illustrates, moreover, that Sanua was overly pragmatic in her feminist thinking and acting. She accepted the paternalist culture of the French business firm, at the same time as she insisted on being – and educating – men’s equal. So did the graduates themselves. However, in the mid 1930s, the alumni association developed a new and unexpected ring. But, before entering this exciting chapter of HECJF’s history, a better understanding of the professional strategies employed by the male graduates is needed, since they, to a large extent, stood as the model for the female business graduates, particularly as of from the early years of the Vichy regime onwards.

Labeling and Corporativism – From Professional Strategy to Social Identity

The international recession reached France in the beginning of 1931 and lasted until 1937 – 38.⁶⁷ After years, not to say decades, of joblessness and social insecurity French workers went on strike in 1936. The walkout later also included the unions of the new – and fast-growing – salaried middle classes. This social segment often called the *classes moyennes* in France, included occupations and professionals of various kinds. While some were employees of the lower range, others – such as the engineers – held higher degrees which qualified them for both individual action and responsibility. What glued this diverse group together was a shared social trajectory in a time of industrial unrest. Since the Great War, the middle classes had been uneasy with social developments. And with the economic crises experienced in France in the early 1930s, the situation got considerably worse.⁶⁸ Many in the liberal and specialized professions were left unemployed, and the newly-educated bourgeoisie were faced with a disastrous labor market. Even those coming from well-off families, and attending the best schools had difficulties finding work.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Grelon, André (2001): 32.

The devaluation of the franc in the 1920s had, moreover, reduced the importance of patrimony, making the bourgeoisie – or the “old” middle class – increasingly dependent on educational diplomas and salary, but also pensions, to maintain power and social status. As was shown in chapter 5, a second-range “elite” school, like HEC, experienced growing demand in the 1920s. The “Années folles” and the subsequent recession had thus a positive effect on its ambition to rival the *grandes écoles*. But, in the early 1930s, during the “second” recession, the number of applicants dropped dramatically again, indicating that it was perceived as a bad investment or assurance against unemployment and social devaluation (*déclassement*).

“*La peur de déclassement*” was a reality among most middle-class professionals in the period, and especially among male functionaries. Unemployment had, needless to say, significant consequences for this social-professional segment, which also included the business graduates. But how was this challenge or “fear” met by the *anciens élèves* of HEC? The social-professional strategies employed by the business graduates during the inter-war years comprise a relatively unknown chapter of French history. The business graduates have, in fact, attracted far less attention or interest from historians and sociologists than the engineers have. Luc Boltanski’s influential work *Les cadres: la formation d’un groupe sociale* (1982) has a point of departure in the profession of engineering, not the business graduates. In the eyes of Boltanski, the engineers were the focal point of the emergence of a new social-professional category during the 1930s: the *cadres*.

As the consolidation of the workers had intensified the class struggle, the engineers were literally caught between the forces of capital and labor without having the channels or rights to representation and arbitration as the workers’ unions had. Furthermore, they felt neglected by the political right, as much as threatened by the left and the rise of the Front populaire. This resulted in the conceptualization of a third way, a third force, and a third class, placed in between the working class and the capital owners. And it was in this process, and with the aim of outflanking the established (political) order, that the *cadres* were introduced as a common identity for business employees working in collaboration with engineers, such as the business graduates. The aim was,

⁶⁸ Grelon, André & Heiners Stüick (1994): 43.

generally speaking, to construct a new image of the center that was neither right nor left, and which enabled the engineers, and their collaborators – the *cadres* – to be recognized in society in general, and in the work-place in particular. The founding of the Confédération générale des cadres de l'économie (CGCE) in 1937 was the first attempt to gather engineers and engineers' collaborators (the *cadres*) in a joint confederation, and which included apparently also graduates of HEC.

The common mobilization of the middle classes in the mid-1930s is, therefore, interpreted as a spontaneous action by Boltanski, led by a new and socially-conscious generation of engineering men. André Grelon, an expert on French technical education, questions the spontaneity of this happening, as much as the thinking of the *cadres* as a new – and an “engineer-made” – category. According to him, the mobilization under the banner of *cadres* after 1936 was more a “résultat de pratiques mises en oeuvre depuis la fin du premier conflit mondial” than any “spur-of-the-moment clash”.⁶⁹ And *cadres*, originally a military term, had already entered the professional vocabulary in the early 1920s – to designate professionals working within certain large-scale industries like metallurgy, but also within the field of lower or secondary technical education.⁷⁰ In terms of position within the industrial hierarchy, the *cadres* were placed below the engineers and other specialists. They were, so to speak, low-level employees, though professionally more specialized than foremen. The conceptualization of the *cadres* as a distinct social-professional category was in this respect nothing new during the industrial unrest of the mid 1930s. On the contrary, it was the result – or final culmination – of the changes which had taken place within the system of production and remuneration since the Great War, and which affected not only engineers, but also middle-class professionals in general.⁷¹

The engineers did neither represent a coherent or singular group. Within this profession were there also many social divides and distinctions, which made collective action not only difficult but also a true organizational challenge. An elite-school educated engineer belonging to the *grands corps* was of course far better ranked – and paid – than

⁶⁹ Grelon, André (2001): 30.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 22 – 24.

⁷¹ Ibid: 24 – 25.

a technician graduating from a regional school of engineering.⁷² Thus, the first attempt to improve the socio-political position of the engineers was related to the title itself. At first the object of the engineering unions was to protect it legally, with the intention of preventing other professionals from employing it for their own advantages. The *anciens élèves* of HEC were one of these. In 1930, the alumni association initiated a discussion about making use of the title “commercial engineer” or *ingénieur commerciale*, but the call for dialogue with the engineers was resolute refused.⁷³ The Fédération des associations, sociétés et syndicats français d’ingénieurs (FASSFI), which regulated the use of the term until legal protection was granted in 1934, argued that HEC’s alumni and graduates had neither the right nor the necessary qualifications to discuss the various functions of the engineering profession. Only full-fledged engineers could make use of the title, FASSFI concluded, and from 1934 only those with an engineering degree, which required a minimum of three years’ study, plus two years preparation beforehand.⁷⁴

FASSFI’s attempt to limit the number of accredited engineering schools was not excessively successful, however. In the mid-1930s, 88 different institutions provided the diploma “graduate engineer” in France – whereof many, in the eyes of an elite-school graduate, did not share “the general culture and technical training characteristic of a true industrial engineer”.⁷⁵ The regulation of the title, and the institutions granting it, forced the alumni of HEC to change strategy. Instead of comparing themselves with the engineers, they turned to the graduates of Sciences Po in Paris for social and professional affirmation. And in 1936, this strategy based on the logic of “institutional bounding” resulted in a joint union or syndicate; the Groupement professionnel de diplômés de grandes écoles et facultés collaborateurs du commerce et de l’industrie (GSCD).

According to the name of the group, the *anciens élèves* of HEC saw themselves as “collaborators of business and industry” (*collaborateurs du commerce et de l’industrie*), not as *cadres*. The GSCD saw, on the other hand, early the advantage of recognizing

⁷² While graduates accepted at X, Centrale and Mines had prepared for as many as 5, 6 or even 7 years beforehand, regional engineering schools accepted students even without the *bac*, or directly after high school.

⁷³ Grelon, André (1997): 44, footnote 44. Grelon refers here to the work of Didier Delamare (1986): “Les débuts de la FASFID”, in *Les ingénieurs de la crise*, ed. by Grelon.

⁷⁴ Kipping, Matthias & Jean-Pierre Nioche (1997): 67.

⁷⁵ Grelon, André (1997): 44, Boltanski, Luc (1982/1987): 75.

themselves in the official image of the engineers, and in 1937 joined the federation (CGCE) established by engineers and other non-engineers; i.e. *cadres*. The category developed, therefore, as a subjective identification even for business professionals, who originated from, or were educated, outside the industrial – and technical – (lower) occupations. For the engineers, in contrast, the diffusion of the category had a clear strengthening effect on their identity as a *superior* profession. It confirmed, so to speak, the socio-professional status of the engineer by referring to or pointing at something lower which he was not: i.e.: *cadre*. Within a firm, as in society at large, the engineer was superior to the business graduate, and the CGCE was without exception led by engineers, Boltanski writes.

The Vichy government was the first to provide the *cadres* with an ideological and legal protection, even though its labor law from 1941 never left, so to speak, the drawing board. After the Liberation, the CGCE reorganized as the Confédération générale des cadres (CGC), and in 1946 the union presented its objective as follows:

La CGC a pour mission de représenter et de défendre tous les Ingénieurs et Cadres administratifs et commerciaux devant les pouvoirs publics, dans le Conseil de l'Etat, auprès des Organisations d'ouvriers et d'employeurs... Le respect de la hiérarchie et la représentation de ses membres sont sa préoccupation immédiate; elle n'est pas uniquement un organe de revendications matérielles et morales, mais aussi un foyer d'études; consciente du rôle que les Cadres ont à jouer dans l'économie.⁷⁶

As the citation illustrates, the CGC distinguished between engineers and *cadres*, which in many ways illustrates Grelon's point that the two were looked upon as two different social-professional categories. Moreover, the engineers began to withdraw from the confederation after the Liberation, partly because the spirit of the Vichy regime was revived with its name. This left the organizational apparatus of the confederation to the non-engineers, i.e. the *cadres*, working for their own material interests. A common retirement scheme was among the issues that united CGC's fairly heterogeneous members. Its primary aim, however, was to prevent the *cadres* from being included in the regular social security and retirement system, "and thus to be lumped together with other

employees”.⁷⁷ However, securing “corporatist” privileges for particular professional groups fitted the French political tradition poorly.⁷⁸ Consequently, the *cadre* category never received any official protection after the war, other than through the retirement schemes developed by the *cadres*’ unions themselves. This meant that the professional recognition of this category was left to the individual business firm to decide, in accordance with a so-called “Avancement Cadres aux Conventions Collectives” made in 1945.⁷⁹

But, over time, the term was increasingly used to separate employees “enjoying some level of authority” from others.⁸⁰ However the efforts made by the CGC to expose the economic significance or role of this particular group, for a long time, enjoyed little success. The *cadres*’ contribution to the economic performance of France was not fully recognized until the late 1950s and 1960s, helped by the writings of popular intellectuals like Jean-Jacques Servain-Schreiber and Françoise Giroud in their own weekly *L’Express*.⁸¹ These American inspired writings, though “Euro-centric” in its political range, provided the *cadres* with new legitimacy and identity. It also embraced the engineering profession for the first time. Chapter 8 deals with this ideological rupture more thoroughly, by analyzing the ways in which it affected the field of higher business education in general, and the two-sex model of Paris in particular.

The question we now shall turn to is the interrelationship between the new socio-professional segment, i.e. the *cadres*, and the female business graduates of HECJF.

Mobilizing Women’s ‘Difference’

HECJF’s alumni, initially formed with the aim of running a placement office, followed the progress in the labor market of its graduates with a hawk’s eye during the economic downturn of the 1930s. The annual discourse of the president in these years, Mlle Bishoff, had a clearly anxious tone: “Nous traversons une époque difficile; il s’agit, non

⁷⁶ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 143, 1946): 10.

⁷⁷ Boltanski, Luc (1982/1989): 93.

⁷⁸ Kocka, Jürgen (1980): 272.

⁷⁹ This convention, dividing the *cadres* into three (*cadre 1/débutant*, *cadre 2/moyen* and *cadre 3/supérieure* – with the following distinction a, b, c) in relation to educational credentials and experience, regulated the internal labor markets of business firms until the early 1990s.

⁸⁰ Barsoux, Jean-Louis & Peter Lawrence (1997): 19, Boltanski, Luc (1982/1987): 83.

seulement d'y faire face, mais encore de tâcher d'en améliorer les rigueurs dans la mesure du possible".⁸² When the graduates still managed to keep their jobs, due to their ability to type both faster and better than men, Mlle Bishoff said in 1935:

Je vous dirai aujourd'hui que c'est grâce à leur pratique de la sténodactylographie que nous plaçons la plupart de nos anciennes élèves; elles sont, en effet, capables de remplir 2 emplois à la fois; celui de secrétaire ou de collaboratrice du patron et celui de dactylo; C'est pourquoi bon nombre d'entre nous ont pu conserver leur situation dans des maisons obligées cependant de réduire leur personnel tandis que d'autres ont été engagées de préférence à de candidats masculins ayant une formation intellectuelle et des références équivalentes.⁸³

The following year, in contrast, she did not mince her words.⁸⁴ Use your comparative advantages as women, the president urged, and stick to the work you are good at, and far better at than your male colleagues. "Bénissez donc le Secrétariat qui ne vous fermera pas ses portes tant que vous savez en assurer parfaitement les fonctions matérielles; faites l'impossible, je vous en pris, pour conserver ce monopole qu'on vous laisse encore".⁸⁵ In short, her main advice to the graduates was to draw explicitly on the gender differences that already existed within a firm. It was, so to speak, not the right moment to define or identify oneself as a man's equal. On the contrary, they should – in Mlle Bishoff's words – take advantage of the position – or monopoly – achieved by women as typewriters and as the director's "right hand". This duality represented the true comparative advantage of the female graduates when facing competition with male clerks.

However, HECJF was not alone in turning towards women's "difference" in the 1930s. Well-known feminists expressed similar views and strategies. One of them was Mlle Suzanne Cordelier, author of a number of books on professional careers for women between the two wars.⁸⁶ In her volume *Femmes au travail; étude pratique sur dix-sept carrières féminines* (1935) Cordelier writes that female working possibilities would

⁸¹ Servain-Schreiber later published his bestseller *Le Défi Américain* (1967).

⁸² *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 101, 1935): 1.

⁸³ Mlle Bischoff's, the president of the *Association HECJF*, speech at the 19th General Assembly the 12th of March 1935, cited in *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 100, mars 1935): 3 – 4.

⁸⁴ Mlle Bischoff speech at the 20th General Assembly, March 1936, cited in *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 112, 1936): 5 – 6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

increase if women managed to avoid male rivalry. This could be done by concentrating on work which was considered either specifically female, in the sense that it required qualities that only women had, or by entering professions which employed both men and women.⁸⁷ Yet a third possibility was to stick to collaborative work of the kind HECJF specialized in; “Celui des carrières dites de collaboration comme Secrétaire de Direction”.⁸⁸ But how difficult was it actually, for HECJF graduates to find work?

From what is available of the labor statistics, which is not a lot, unemployment was not a large problem for the graduates of HECJF during the recession. The placement office got, for example, more work offers in 1936 and 1937 than in 1935, even though the president's speeches gave almost the opposite impression i.e. that the situation had got worse.⁸⁹ In 1935, for instance, the organization got 251 proposals for work. Two years later this had grown to 458 – at the same time as the numbers registered as being in need of work (or a change of position) was way under 200. This suggests that the economic crisis of the 1930s, and the sociopolitical processes that followed, had a rather strong impact on the construction of gender within the female business school. Facing the danger of unemployment and decreasing social status, the answer was to take advantage rather than to diminish the sexual division of labor already structuring the corporate office, replicating the nineteenth-century family-ideology of separate spheres. One might, however, wonder to what extent a strategy of this kind, emphasizing women as typists and secretaries, was only for the good.

An accentuation of HECJF's “difference” from male clerks entailed an evident risk of merging with the lack of higher degrees of female office personnel. The strategy of emphasizing women's qualities as secretaries and typists could, therefore, easily lead to a devaluation of the education and degree given by the school, while simultaneously leaving the specialized tasks like sales, accounting and management to men – tasks for which HECJF also qualified its graduates. The *anciennes élèves* got, in the early years of the crisis, many requests from members wondering whether there was a labor union for

⁸⁶ Smith, Paul (1996): 89.

⁸⁷ *Bulletin HECJF* (No. 109, 1935): 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ See Appendix 9.

secretaries of their kind.⁹⁰ “Existe-t-il un syndicat de secrétaires?” was the common question, but the answer was no. There was, according to the reply of the alumni, no labor union corresponding to the notion of the occupational category “secretary” produced by the school, and thus “capable de donner un appui effectif aux secrétaires de notre espèce”.⁹¹ Those already existing – such as the Syndicats des Secrétaires, Sténos-Dactylos, Comptables, part of the Fédération des Unions de Syndicats Professionnels féminins, had a too-narrow definition of this work category, the alumni stated. It depended solely on the words per minute typed, not on a specific education or training. The level of *culture générale* held by the graduates of HECJF enabled them, however, to earn far better than most other female employees.⁹² If a candidate had some experience, she could easily get a monthly wage of 1,500 francs, and if she had solid references, even more. And it was this quality that made HECJF’s position in the labor market special, the alumni argued. Although they represented no organized profession, like the engineers, they were “là même capable de faire respects les salaires mérités pas les travailleuses qui y appartiennent”.⁹³

The alumni organization was, all the same, not seen as the right starting point for a labor union. Neither was the Union des Association des anciens élèves des écoles supérieure de commerce (UAESC), which brought together graduates from all the French business schools except HEC.⁹⁴ What was needed, the *anciennes élèves* argued, was an independent union, a “Syndicat Professionnel des HECJF”, attached to the GSCD, which would group the “diplômes des Grandes Écoles suivantes; HEC, Sciences Politiques et ESC de Paris”.⁹⁵ This would enable them to make use of the title *cadres* too, which

⁹⁰ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 122, 1937): 1 – 6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² There was considerable wage gap between male and female employees. When the issue of equal pay for work of equal value was discussed in the *HECJF Bulletin* in 1937, it was estimated that the female wage was about 10% less than the male wage (*HECJF Bulletin*, No. 122, 1937: 11).

⁹³ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 122, 1937): 5.

⁹⁴ The *Anciens Élèves* of HEC decided to leave this association in 1936, in order to establish a more expansive – and exclusive – one, i.e. Union des Grandes Écoles (UGE), whose objective was to “utiliser la force corporative des Écoles sur un plan supérieur pour constituer un ‘Esprit Grande Ecole’”. The *anciennes élèves* of HECJF transferred to this group in 1947, after being recognized as a *grande école* by the elite school community (*HECJF Bulletin*, No. 151, 1948: 10).

⁹⁵ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 2, 1941): 2

during the Vichy government had been given legal protection. In 1941, the *HECJF Bulletin* reports:

Notre formation particulière, la valeur de notre diplôme, la conception propre que nous avons au secrétariat nous imposent un syndicat uniquement HECJF qui nous permette, puisque que notre culture professionnelle nous y autorise, de nous intégrer dans ces 'cadres administratifs' admis enfin, en tant que catégorie sociale, par la Charte du Travail, et assimilés aux ingénieurs.⁹⁶

The leitmotiv for creating a "syndicat uniquement HECJF" was the male business graduates, or more specifically those of HEC. The spokeswoman for the new labor union continued:

En créant notre syndicat, nous suivons le même mouvement que les autres diplômés des Grandes Ecoles et Facultés. Collaborateurs d'entreprises économiques qui se trouvent en face des mêmes problèmes que les nôtres. Le Syndicat Professionnel des HEC diplômées est déjà actif...⁹⁷

The female business graduates rapidly saw the advantages of recognizing themselves in the official image of the *cadres*, and thus following the path already trodden by the alumni of HEC. In this way, the *anciennes élèves* of HECJF were able to defend their interests as *educated* employees, which in fact was precondition for distinguishing themselves from secretaries and female office personnel with a lower education. By this, the alumni also left the professional emphasis on the female secretary to the advantage of the notion of the graduates as *cadres*, and thus superior to female office employees in general.

'Je suis cadre féminine...

Only five years after the professional syndicate of HECJF was formed, it contained more members than the collectives of HEC and Sciences Po together.⁹⁸ And when the CGC was to be restructured in 1945/46, to support "la mention des Cadres administratifs et commerciaux sur le même plan que les Ingénieurs", the female *cadres* decided to join

⁹⁶ Ibid.:6.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ *HECHF Bulletin* (No. 143,1946): 11.

in.⁹⁹ They even were on the board of the *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Ingénieurs et de Cadres Supérieurs (FNSICS)*, a federation working primarily for securing social security and retirement schemes for its members. What actually unified the cadres was under intense debate, however.¹⁰⁰ The attempts to define it objectively were many, and its gender dimension remained unclear – even though an increasing part of its members were women.

The discussions held in the *HECJF Bulletin* illustrate, moreover, that the gender troubles faced by many of the female business graduates were far from resolved with the incorporation of the HECJF in the professional unions and networks of male business graduates. Despite being recognized as *cadres*, on the ground of membership in the *cadres* unions, many companies hesitated to employ women in positions of the kind held by male graduates. According to the alumni of HECJF, this was because the female *cadres commerciales* faced different obstacles than, for example, women belonging to an established profession like law, engineering or medicine.¹⁰¹ “Devant une jeune femme avocate, ou médecine, ou chimiste, la voie est ouverte. Sa valeur personnelle est seule en jeu. Une jeune HECJF qui entre dans l’administration des affaires se heurte à un double obstacle.”¹⁰² On the one hand, the female graduates were stopped or blocked by men and a male business culture, which contributed to keeping women down; i.e. “au range de sours-ordre”. On the other hand, this culture was reproduced by women themselves, simply because so many young girls had no goal other than to get married. That the two aspects of this cultural “obstacle” were tightly interwoven was self-evident, the President

⁹⁹ Ibid.: 10.

¹⁰⁰ The discussion held in *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 170, 1954): 6 – 10, is a very good example of the difficulties faced by professionally trained groups, like the business graduates, when attempting to define the *cadres* objectively, a problem that Luc Boltanski addresses in his seminal work *Les Cadres*. The role of higher education is, for example, highly unclear. One was, or could be, a *cadre* either on the basis of work which required professional knowledge acquired through higher professional education, or through practical experience which was recognized as being of equal value and quality. This meant that also the “self-made man” could be included in the category, and not only those having a formal higher education. In a report presented by Mlle Bischoff, after a meeting with the other French business school graduates in 1954, she said following: “Est cadre, toute personne exerçant une fonction dans laquelle elle met en œuvre les connaissances acquises par une formation technique résultant d’études scientifiques, commerciales, administration, financières, juridiques, généralement consacrée par un diplôme, soit d’une expérience professionnelle personnelle reconnue équivalente”.

¹⁰¹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 154, 1949): 11.

¹⁰² Ibid.

continued, though the second was still the most difficult to change – even it originated from the woman herself:

Le deuxième, ah!, le deuxième est le plus difficile à vaincre car il vient d'elle-même. Et sans doute détermine-t-il le premier. C'est un certain amateurisme. C'est la jeune fille qui travaille sans ambition de faire carrière, en attendant se marier par exemple...¹⁰³

For those girls who still wanted to make a career, the President recommended hard work and planning. And Mme Ginèbre, the director of the school agreed. Both assured the members that the administration and the alumni association were ready to support those aiming at climbing high in the business hierarchy. Though, they should not forget that it was normal for female employees to start far behind men of equal training. "Même à connaissance égales, même à intelligence égale, les traits de votre caractère et des données purement physiques, telles qu'une plus ou moins grande endurance, vous classent très différemment", the director warned.¹⁰⁴ In plainer words, the girls should never forget that they, because they were women, would always be classified differently within a firm than men. This did not mean, however, that they would never manage to make progress and climb the corporate ladder, because

Il est normal qu'une ancienne élève débutante passe au service de Dactylographie pour arriver à une parfaite maîtrise et connaître la vie de la Maison. Mais il est aussi anormal de l'y laisser, et l'in conçoit qu'après deux ou trois mois de ce régime, elle demande à changer de travail ou d'emploi.¹⁰⁵

The strategy was clear; start as a typist, and when you know the firm better – and have, at the same time, proven your own strength and competence to the boss – ask for promotion. Likewise they had to keep in mind that a diploma such as the one issued by HECJF, did not provide the girls with the right "à un poste ou à une classification".¹⁰⁶ It just opens doors, the director said.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: 15.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

...et ce n'est pas aussi bien?

The alumni association addressed, in various ways, the professional inferiority felt and experienced by the female business graduates of HECJF in the early postwar period. The graduates still ignored some of the advice given, such as that to remain modest and patient. A telling story in this respect concerns the internal debates, but also the practices, concerning labeling, because one of the most recurrent internal issues discussed between 1944 and 1960, was the mistrust of the acronym "HECJF".¹⁰⁷ By simply erasing the capitals "JF", which symbolized their sex, some girls prided themselves as graduates of HEC. The first time it happened, according to Mlle Bischoff, was in 1944, and it made the representatives of HEC angry. She replied:

Eh! bien non, la valeur de nos études n'est pas en jeu mais nous comprenons fort bien que les HEC s'émeuvent, et ils ne manquent pas de s'émouvoir, de la confusion que cette méthode risque de faire naître...Nos diplômes correspondent à deux préparations différentes. La nôtre est parfaitement adaptée au but qu'elle se propose. Nous sommes des HECJF et je ne vois pas que nous ayons à rougir de ces deux dernières lettres qu'il faut, quoi qu'il en soit, garder.¹⁰⁸

The tactic used by some of the female graduates was to use the short form HEC when applying for work, hoping it would bring certain advantages in terms of career and work opportunities, not to mention wages. As a replacement for the gender "difference" emphasized by the alumni in the 1930s, the graduates drew attention to gender equity – if not neutrality. They obviously wanted to reduce the notion of a *female* business school, knowing that the title and diploma of HEC had a much higher symbolic value than the female equivalent.

Mlle Bischoff's strict warning in 1944 was still not enough to stop the misuse. Almost every year, new discussions and angry warnings appeared at the General Assembly, and these short accounts were printed in the *HECJF Bulletin*. A few girls even searched for work through the local newspapers using this fake identity.¹⁰⁹ This activity

¹⁰⁷ *HECJF Bulletin* (1946): 3; (No. 147, 1947): 6; (No. 154, 1949): 12; (No. 169, 1954): 5.

¹⁰⁸ *HECJF Bulletin* (March 1946): 3.

¹⁰⁹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 167, 1953): 5.

once again forced the alumni of HEC to take action, and at the school assembly in 1954 the new president, Mme Vadot-Gues Willer, prepared another warning:

Vous savez toutes que nous somme des HECJF et non de HEC et que les anciennes élèves de notre école n'ont rien à envier aux anciens HEC. Il semble néanmoins que quelques-unes d'entre nous aient encore à cet égard un certain complexe puisqu'à peine...¹¹⁰

"You have nothing to win using this fake identity", Willer continued, "tout le monde sachent que l'école HEC n'est pas mixte".¹¹¹

What is striking about the internal debate – and warnings – on the misuse of the acronym HEC, is the evident gap between the official discourse of HECJF's alumni, on the one hand, and the individual practices of female graduates, on the other. HEC graduates were far better regarded, professionally, than the graduates of HECJF's, a fact that the women tried to overcome in their own way. Their felt need to reduce – or hide – their own sex, by making use of the symbol of the superior male form, hence says a lot about the corporate office as a place where gender is produced as much as reproduced under shifting circumstances. The power relations, in contrast, were surprisingly constant. They were, so to speak, fixed between or within the logic of male superiority and universality, and female inferiority and particularity, a logic that made the male office practices the norm, while the female ones were looked upon as something "different". Only HECJF's carried their gender with them, and it was this particular disadvantage that the graduates tried to reduce when omitting the capital letters "JF".

Practicing Gender within a System of 'Inequality'

To enter work at a level corresponding to their of training was something graduates of HECJF never could take for granted. And if – on rare occasions – it happened, it always took much longer time for the female graduates than the male. Sometimes, internal promotion even depended on hard argumentation. A woman, who graduated from HECJF in 1953, said the following when looking back at her career more than thirty years later:

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

J'ai obtenu ma promotion, par une argumentation serrée. Il y en a aussi qui ont travaillé dix ans comme secrétaire de direction sous les ordres d'un HEC garçon. ¹¹²

That is not to say that words and arguments were enough to enter higher business positions. In addition to intense "lobbying" on her own behalf, this woman had to work ten years as a personal assistant under a "HEC boy" before getting the chance to climb the business hierarchy. For some, this meant being defined, officially, as secretaries, although they in practice had both more power and influence than ordinary office personnel. "J'étais secrétaire de direction mais j'ai rapidement eu une secrétaire", another told. ¹¹³ Sometimes that also caused problems. Being the only female employee with a female secretary, was to ask for trouble. It made many, and especially the female clerks, madly jealous.

Pour moi, ça a été un parcours du combattant...mais avec ce diplôme, j'étais mieux armée contre la hiérarchie...et l'attaque des secrétaires jalouses. ¹¹⁴

Although it is difficult to generalize from two single quotations, the experiences of these women exemplify in many ways the professional differences between graduates of HEC and HECJF, at the same time as it shows the internal differences among female employees within the firm. While a degree from HECJF enabled the female business graduates to be in charge of other female employees, they needed a considerably longer time to get the same level of influence and responsibility as graduates of HEC, which often involved responsibility over male employees. The *Cinquantaire* made for HECJF's 50th in 1966, also affirms this impression. ¹¹⁵ This booklet, containing biographical data on the graduates, documents that several women managed to become

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² *Exécutif* (janvier 1984): "Il y a trente ans" by Jean-Philippe Legros: 33 (Interview with HECJF-women 30 years after graduation).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. This is confirmed by graduates interviewed in the *Cinquantaire HECJF* (1966). See for example page 28, Mlle Caron (promotion 1917): "les hommes n'étaient pas habitués à avoir des collaboratrices féminines; mais, en vérité, ce sont surtout les femmes qui me jalouaient".

¹¹⁵ Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris (1966): *Cinquantaire HECJF*: 28 – 60. During a field study in French business firms in the late 1970s and early 1990s, the sociologist Jacqueline Laufer met a fair number of HECJF graduates in positions as *cadres* and *cadres supérieures*. For more on this, see her book *La féminité neutralisée? Les femmes cadres dans l'entreprise* (1982).

cadre supérieure after many years in service. A few even got to the top, and became director or chief executive officer of the firms in which they worked. The far most common occupations were, however, personal assistant or middle *cadre*. But also at this level, the relationship between education and occupation, qualification and responsibility were far from self-regulative. Even at the lower and intermediate levels, one needed strength and luck to enter, as much as patience and time.

In their positions as *cadres*, the graduates performed various types of work, but the roles of purchaser and accountant, human relations and marketing officer were the most widely held occupations, in addition to journalist. Marketing was in particular a popular arena for HECJF graduates in the 1950s and 1960s. Apparently, it was one of the business occupations most open to women – apart from “*secrétaire de direction*”, the *HECJF Bulletin* reported in 1959.¹¹⁶ However, one should still keep in mind, the alumni reported, that not even within a brand new sector was a woman graduate perceived as a man's equal. According to a report on the marketing profession printed in the journal, women had to start further down in the office hierarchy than their male colleagues, but the possibilities of being promoted and of making a good career did exist there. But, according to the author, one had always to be prepared to encounter both men and firms that were deliberately anti-feminist:

Dans la publicité, vous commencerez, peut-être, 'plus bas' que vos camarades masculins, mais vous avez vos chances pour les rattraper...ceci dit sur un plan général car, dans notre profession comme ailleurs, il y a des hommes et des affaires volontairement anti-féministes...¹¹⁷

The underlining of anti-feminism within the field of business in this citation is interesting. Not only because it illustrates the patriarchal culture of the business world, reproduced by those operating within it, but also because there was openness about its existence within the HECJF community. In other words, HECJF's feminist legacy was neither vested nor forgotten. It continued throughout the 1930s and the postwar years, albeit not as explicitly as in the early days of Sanua. The school entered, however, a new and more offensive period when Mme Yvette Meniezz took over, in 1957, as HECJF's

¹¹⁶ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 187, 1959): “HECJF dans la profession; La publicité”: 4 – 12.

formal director after Mme Ginébre. Attention to the female *cadres* was renewed, and their gender specific problems. In 1966, for example, HECJF arranged a study day devoted “des problèmes des femmes cadres”, with the aid of an information center for female *cadres* (Centre d’information des cadres féminines) established the year before.¹¹⁸ The aim of this meeting was to discuss practical solutions for women facing problems or discrimination at work. Because it was evident, as Meniezz deplored, that “les possibilités de promotion et de perfectionnement ouvertes à leurs collègues masculins sont encore trop souvent refusées aux femmes”.¹¹⁹ Its feminist ambition was relatively modest, or realistic, however. Rather than reproducing male behavior, the key to success was, in Meniezz’ words, to influence business in their “female” way: “[P]our cela ne pas chercher à démontrer qu’une femme peut travailler, commander, organiser, juger comme un homme, mais qu’elle peut le faire comme une femme et que c’est aussi bien”.¹²⁰

Concluding Remarks

At the moment the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) took over the ownership of HECJF, gender or masculinity turned into an invisible force within the Parisian field of higher business education. This does not mean, however, that gender was of no importance for the inclusion of HEC, and its graduates, in the French elite school fraternity. It seems reasonable to argue, in retrospect, that the creation of a two-sex track in Paris prevented a feminization of HEC between the two wars, by institutionalizing, and thus “neutralizing”, the sexual-division of labor practiced within the business office. When Pierre Bourdieu overlooked this apparent force of gender in his seminal work on the *grandes écoles*, it was primarily because of a lack of analytical skills available to identify what he himself has called the “universe of the undisputable”.¹²¹ Simply because gender is a fundamental or primary way of signifying relationships of power, to follow Joan W. Scott’s thinking, it has often been taken for granted by historical actors as well as scholars, like Bourdieu. The use of gender as a strategy was, therefore, seldom made

¹¹⁷ Ibid.: 8.

¹¹⁸ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 218, 1966): 21. The study day was arranged on the 2nd of October 1966

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Bourdieu, Pierre (1972/1976).

explicit by those in power, but was implicit, institutionally embedded and taken for granted.

The two-sex model of higher business education, created during the interwar period in Paris, accentuated the dominant position of HEC within the field of French business education. The strategies employed by its management and graduates, to gain acceptance as an elite school, were, therefore, copied by the directors of HECJF, who were fighting for institutional and professional acceptance among men. Given its institutional genesis, as a business school for women, it continued, nevertheless, to be considered as the field's "other". This positioning accentuated gender as a strategically important force, whether they wanted this or not. Unlike the male graduates of HEC, graduates of HECJF made constant use of gender to secure professional recognition and institutional acceptance within the business labor market and the elite school system. Acceptance in relation to these two fields demanded, however, different tactics. Whereas elite-school approval was subject to the image of gender "sameness", which in practice meant that HECJF copied many of the educational and cultural structures of HEC, its relationship to the internal labor market of the business firm was even more complex.

During the economic recession of the 1930s, for instance, the HECJF alumni told their graduates to make strategic use of their femaleness, in order to fight unemployment. Practically speaking, this first and foremost meant preserving women's monopoly of secretarial work, especially as typists and as the director's "right hand"; i.e. his personal assistant. A focus of this kind was not unproblematic, however. Given that no professional training was needed to become a business secretary, the category was accessible for all women with a basic knowledge in languages and practical office work and organization. The training offered by HECJF, in contrast, emphasizing general culture, individual development and sport, differed largely from the courses given by the commercial girls' schools. As a matter of fact, HECJF's syllabus and socialization corresponded more or less with the male business schools, in order to enable the girls to achieve much higher and better paid positions than secretaries holding lower business degrees. This motivated the *anciennes élèves* to organize in the *cadres* unions in 1941, in order to defend their professional interests in relation to other office women with an inferior level of professional training.

The inclusion of the school's labor union in the male *cadres* unions did not provide the female business graduates with any professional guarantees, however. A diploma from HECJF, or HEC for that sake, never gave one the *cadre* title automatically. On the contrary, the socio-professional value of this category was up to individual firms to decide in accordance with the guidelines developed – and accepted – by the *cadres* in cooperation with the employers. Subsequently, gender continued to influence if not determine the business graduates professional career, which in short meant that female graduates almost without exception arrived second compared to male graduates.

Within the HECJF community, there was a growing consciousness about the professional obstacles and problems faced by the female *cadres* in the 1960s. These discourses employed the argument of equality in “difference”. Put simply; the point was not to follow male behavior blindly, but to keep being a woman. To what extent this emphasis on women's specificities or differences from men were compatible with the new management paradigm which was making its way into the French business schools from the mid 1960s onward, will be discussed in chapter 8. But first, we have to look to Norway again. The last time we left the country, the Parliament had just voted in favor of building a national business school in Bergen.

The college to which he now was going was a state university and as such non-political, neutral and strictly academic in character. But it was an open secret that the initiative for its creation, as well as a considerable part of its funds, had come from conservative private business interests. Thus it was safe to assume that the economics promulgated from its chairs would be liberal, bourgeois economics. Student Burlefot, however, was a socialist and he shuddered at the thought of the next two and half years.

A. Mykle¹²²

CHAPTER SEVEN

Norway: Reinforcing Male Dominance through Separate Syllabi

The glorious boom which followed the Great War, was considerably stronger in Norway than in other countries. With an internationally-oriented economy based on exports, the wartime boom invited a ruthless speculation in shares.¹²³ In the years 1918 – 1920, new businesses were listed with an incredible speed, and when the stock market later crashed, in the fall of 1920, the state had to intervene. But the official counter-policy, combining “bank rescuing” with a deflationary monetary policy, did not prevent bankruptcies amongst capitalists and banks. In the years to come Norway thus witnessed, like France, rising unemployment and class conflict, while the authorities had to pay a high price for the dizzy dance of the wartime boom.

The state’s financial crisis, which essentially was a debt crisis, put several of the social reforms initiated before and during the war on hold.¹²⁴ One of them was the parliamentary support for a Norwegian business school in Bergen. It was not until 1936 that the Norges Handelshøyskole (NHH) managed to open, by which point much had already changed. Apart from the German invention of business economics, the lines of

¹²² Mykle, Agnar (1956/1961): 19.

¹²³ Myrvang, Christine (2001): 152.

Norwegian politics had been redrawn. In 1935, the Labor Party formed a government with the Agrarian Party, and together they challenged the bourgeois politicians on issues linked to economic policy in general, and the degree of state involvement in particular.¹²⁵ Much of NHH's "commercial" or "private" character had, therefore, been removed when the first students entered.¹²⁶ The commercial "sciences" were replaced by business economics and political economy, a kind of macroeconomics that was to achieve considerable administrative and discursive power within the Labor led repairs of Norwegian inter-war economy and the subsequent postwar reconstruction. This scientific foundation diminished the importance of gender – or patriarchy – within the Norwegian field of higher business education. As was seen in chapter 6, education and qualification provided strong competition to gender for French business graduates before and after World War Two, even if the ruling Parisian institutions operated within an explicit two-sex system. Thus, the current chapter highlights the development of the Norwegian business school in Bergen, and its impact on – and interrelationship with – the implicit two-sex model identified in chapter 4.

Economics – The New Authority

Even if there was no real marriage of economics and economic politics before World War Two, and the subsequent transition to a peace-time economy, the first affiliations between scholarly and political circles were made in the early 1930s.¹²⁷ Essential in this emerging bounding between university professors and the Labor Party was Ragnar Frisch, professor in economics at the University of Oslo and future Nobel Price winner.¹²⁸ As one of the key initiators and instigators of the University Institute of Economics in 1931, Frisch was at the head of the development of a new type of economics embedded in a

¹²⁴ Danielsen, Rolv et al (1995): 343.

¹²⁵ Ibid.: 342 – 343. This agreement concerned the issue of state grants to meet the crisis. The first Labor Party government was formed in 1928, but lasted not more than a month.

¹²⁶ *NHH Beretning 1936/37*, Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 98 – 99, Haaland, Anders (1996): 166 – 167.

¹²⁷ Thue, Fredrik (2004 forthcoming).

¹²⁸ Professor Ragnar Frisch received the Nobel Price in Economics in 1969 for his contributions to macroeconomics and econometrics. Frisch was part of NHH's school board from 1937 until 1942, representing the University of Oslo (Olav Harald Jensen & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen, 1986: 432 – 433).

vision of macroeconomic management at a national level.¹²⁹ This type of economics, later known as the “Oslo school of economics”, sought to integrate empirical research with quantitative macro-economic model building with the aid of mathematics and statistics.¹³⁰ Somewhat simplified, this gave economics a new mathematical language that provided for far better control over economic preconditions than the old “verbalism”. As a result, complicated economical phenomenon and processes could be analyzed in their totality, with the aim of preventing or reducing the force of international recessions and market downturns nationally.

With the postwar crises after World War One freshly in mind, predictability and control of the economy was to become one of Frisch’s main goals. And it was this particular point which drew the Labor Party’s attention to Frisch’s research and vision of macroeconomic management in the early 1930s, when it was trying to replace its semi-revolutionary program with a strategy for immediate social and economic reforms.¹³¹

The Norwegian Labor Party had held a revolutionary and pro-Soviet political program throughout the 1920s, but with the electoral defeat in 1930 – in which the party lost 12 of the 59 seats won in 1927 – this course was re-framed.¹³² Within this transformation – from a revolutionary party to a “reformist” and national-oriented party – domestic problems arising from the economic crises were central concerns. Even the bourgeois parties began to see the need for state intervention in a liberal economy, in the form of subsidies. But they also acknowledged the limits set by the national, and so-far unsolved, financial crisis. Labor party politicians faced of course similar limitations or constraints. Yet the will to find new solutions for the state’s debt crisis was considerably stronger among social democrats than among non-socialists. The Labor Party economist Ole Colbjørnsen, who previously had been a devoted communist and a strong supporter of Soviet planned economy, was at the forefront of this pursuit. Searching for new

¹²⁹ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984): 145. The University Institute of Economics was privately financed, for one thing, by the Rockefeller Foundation.

¹³⁰ Ibid.: 146.

¹³¹ Thue, Fredrik (2004 forthcoming).

¹³² Danielsen, Rolf et al (1995): 340. The Labor Party joined the Moscow-dominated Third International (the Comintern) in 1921 only to resign two years later.

answers, Colbjørnsen went to London in 1931, and brought Keynesians economics back home with him.¹³³

Ragnar Firsch's theoretically-based management of the total national economy, on the basis of mathematical and statistical calculations, resembled in many ways the expansionist theory of John M. Keynes. The historians Trond Bergh and Tore Jørgen Hanish argue, however, that the anti-depression measures of Frisch were far less investment-oriented than the ones of Keynes, and put more emphasis on consumption.¹³⁴ Frisch's judgment of the British economist was also somewhat reserved. Nonetheless, his macroeconomic solutions to the economic recession, emphasizing the importance of increasing the economic circulation by means of public credits and an expansive monetary policy, soon converged with the new activist policies of the left.¹³⁵ The expertise of Frisch was decisive for the political reorientation of the Labor Party in the early 1930s, from communism to reformist socialism, as he was largely responsible for the party's "crises plan", announced in 1934.¹³⁶ In this document Frisch came up with a completely new idea – the National Budget, through which the national economy was to be regulated and controlled.¹³⁷ But at the same time as he helped Colbjørnsen and his political colleagues out by finding scientific solutions to economic and political problems, Frisch also prepared the ground for the economic profession, together with Ingvar Wederwang.

Professor Wederwang was slightly older than Frisch. He had already been working as an economic professor for several years when Frisch returned home from a visiting professorship at Yale in 1931. His research interests also differed considerably from Frisch's. Wederwang was concentrating more on micro-based research of the commercial industries than on macroeconomic models. Knowledge about the individual firm was, in his opinion, vital for the understanding of the economy as a whole. It was, in Wederwang's own words,

¹³³ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984): 192. Rune Slagstad (1998) has analyzed this emerging ideology as a blend of technocratic and socialist elements.

¹³⁴ Ibid.: 188.

¹³⁵ Thue, Fredrik (2004 forthcoming).

¹³⁶ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984): 183.

the key that opens our understanding of central problems of economic-theoretical character, for instance the study of productivity and provides for an accurate judgment of the nature and effects of economic and social political preparations.¹³⁷

This interest in microeconomics would later lead Wederwang to Bergen, as the president of NHH. However, in the years before this, he actively participated in the creation of a new economic profession together with Frisch, by reforming the old “state-economic course” at the University of Oslo (UiO).

As a result of the Liberal politicians’ eagerness to expose the university to the educational demands of practical life, the state-economic course had initially been imposed by the Parliament in 1905. Its curriculum was of two years’ duration, and consisted of various disciplines like law, language and economics, including accounting and political science. But unlike other university courses, one did not need the *Ex-A*, the Norwegian admission ticket into the academic world, to enter it. As we remember from chapter 4, successful graduates of the commercial *gymnasiums* were also allowed in, after a request from the Mercantile Club in 1906, which gave the course a different labor-market orientation or value than most other university programs. The economic profession that Wederwang and Frisch decided to reform in the early 1930s had both an unclear and mediocre professional orientation. “Typically the [economists] started relatively low in the occupational hierarchy and needed a long time to advance”.¹³⁹ Prior to 1945, Bergh and Hanish write, graduates from the two-year-long university program did not manage to enter the upper administrative level of state. Those who were employed by private firms, moreover, conducted ordinary clerical work on lower levels.

¹³⁷ Frisch’s research on the national budget resulted in the so-called MODIS model, which was a macroeconomic tool used in the development of the National Budget and in calculations of the effects of the economic and monetary policy.

¹³⁸ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984): 108 Citation in original: “nøglen som åpner for forståelsen av viktige økonomisk-teoretiske problemer, f.eks. hele produksjonslæren og for den rette vurdering av de nærings- og sosialpolitiske foranstaltningers vesen og virkninger.”

¹³⁹ Ibid.: 105. Citation in original: “Det typiske for statsøkonomene var at de begynte langt nede i stillingshierarkiet og trengte lang tid på å avansere.”

Banking and insurance were common professions for the economics graduates, while others worked as journalists.¹⁴⁰

The course in economics created in 1905 hence functioned more like a combination of a commercial college and a school of public administration than as a university program. It met the expanding demand for semi-professional or white-collar labor within the private as well as the public sectors in the early 1900s, which gave it an inferior status compared to both the liberal and the academic professions. And it was this unclear professional targeting that had given the candidates and the course a highly “unsatisfactory reputation, which they had suffered from the very start”, to quote Wederwang from 1931.¹⁴¹ Thus, the reforms presented by Wederwang later that year had an explicit ambition of improving the professional value of the economists. The same year Frisch returned home from the US. Fearing that he would accept a more permanent offer from Yale, a personal chair had been created for Frisch at the University of Oslo. His theoretical program was, therefore, to be introduced at the stage when the faculty already had announced a changing professional and educational strategy, which was to bridge the gap between the economists and other university-trained professions. Not only was the program enlarged from two to four years, but the vocation-oriented syllabus was also replaced with a profoundly research-oriented and mathematical theoretical program, that sought to educate academics and top-level bureaucrats for the state’s administration.

Although the reform had no impact on the number of applicants, the interest in economics among women dropped considerably after 1935.¹⁴² As early as in 1919, 6 out of 29 graduates attending the two-year long study in economics were women, and by the time the new study program showed its first results – in 1939 – the females represented 13% of all economists who had graduated since 1905.¹⁴³ The new *cand.oecon* degree developed, however, as a male bastion. Almost no women applied for it, and in 1953, for

¹⁴⁰ Bergh, Trond & Tore Jørgen Hanish (1985): 33.

¹⁴¹ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984): 106 *Citation in original*: “et undermålsmerke, som disse hele tiden har lidt under”, taken from *Nordisk Administrativ Tidsskrift* 1931: 238.

¹⁴² *Økonomiske kandidater 1908 – 1957* (1963): 19.

¹⁴³ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984): 102. Historians of women and gender have paid little interest to the fact that the Department of Economics at the University of Oslo had relatively many female students in the early 1900s. Ida Blom (1995) mentions it briefly in an article on women’s entry into academic studies. She says: “Forbausende kan det være at statsøkonomi tiltrakk seg flere kvinner enn menn” (Strangely enough more women than men were attracted by economics): 24.

which gender-specific statistics are available, only six of the 197 enrolled students of economics were women, as Fredrik Thue writes in his compelling doctoral thesis on the development of the social sciences in twentieth-century Norway.¹⁴⁴

The scientific milieu emerging around Frisch was not necessarily hostile to female candidates. Still, there were no women in his youthful research team. Professor Johan Vogt was, in fact, more conscious than Frisch about including women in the new master profession of the reformist-socialist state.¹⁴⁵ According to Harriet Holter, who is known as the founding mother of Norwegian feminist scholarship, Vogt used to invite the female students home, for scholarly discussions. She herself graduated from the Department of Economics in 1946, but from early on felt the urge to leave the instrumental target-oriented rationality of Frisch.¹⁴⁶ By reading Karl Marx and other economists on the side, Holter later developed a profound interest in the human, or inhuman, aspects of industrial production. Some of her earliest work, on occupational roles of women and workers, remind one to some extent of the work of the French scholar, Madeleine Guilbert.¹⁴⁷ It was nonetheless her extensive and groundbreaking work on the interrelationship between sex roles and social structures that was to give Holter an international name – within the new discipline of social psychology.¹⁴⁸ Sex-segregation was for Holter a macro-sociological phenomenon that had to be seen and studied in relation to social stratification and division of labor, but which tended to be reproduced and maintained psychologically. In order to capture this complex relationship, she developed the notion of “sex roles”: a social pattern or logic that governs men and women’s behavior.

Holter was never to return to the quantitative, macro-economic model building of Frisch and his male disciples, but instead cleared new land within the social sciences.

In retrospect, Frisch’s vision of macroeconomic planning and professionalism stand out as being highly paternalist. His paternalism was especially visible in relation to

¹⁴⁴ Thue, Fredrik (2004 forthcoming).

¹⁴⁵ Haukaa, Runa et al (red. 1982): “Harriet Holter i samtale med Bjørg Aase Sørensen og Hildur Vee”: 178.

¹⁴⁶ *Økonomiske kandidater 1908 – 1957* (1963): 103.

¹⁴⁷ See for instance *Kvinner i arbeidslivet* (1958), *Kjønnsforskjeller i yrkesadferd* (1962) and “Women’s occupational situation in Scandinavia”, in *International Labour Review* (Vol. 93/No. 4 – April 1966).

the ideal of a democratic state as one that engages in “curbing the excesses of parliamentary democracy through a scientific rationalization of government”, to quote Thue.¹⁴⁹ To argue that these rather narrow, theoretical and highly positivist visions of economics limited female recruitment to the field is too simple, but it definitely moved the new profession away from the “commercial sphere”, which employed many women. The radical drop in the number of female applicants after the curricular reforms of Wederwang and Frisch, points to the fact that the university program in economics lost contact with the commercial high schools as a path of entry, and thus also with the female sex. By the outbreak of World War Two, and the German occupation of Norway in the spring of 1940, as much as 36% of these institutions were girls, qualifying for general office work within private and public sector.¹⁵⁰

The Feminization of the Commercial *Gymnasium* ...

When the Departmental committee on the commercial “high-schools” of 1939 was reestablished after the war, it could not prevent commenting on the mass entry of women into the business high schools.¹⁵¹ In the final report handed over to the government four years later it stated:

The division between male and female candidates displays several interesting features.... The female candidates moved into the two-year-long program in the late 1920s, and these candidates have first of all influenced the development from 1928 to 1940. Within the period already mentioned the number of male candidates rose by only 43, 5% whereas the number of female students increased in total by 670%, from 20 in 1928 to 154 in 1940. The largest set of female candidates – 187 – graduated in 1943.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Her most known book is *Sex roles and social structures* (1970), which builds directly on her doctoral thesis.

¹⁴⁹ Thue, Fredrik (forthcoming).

¹⁵⁰ RA, 1251, 2/12: Innstilling fra Handelsgymnaskomiteen av 2. mai 1946 (1949): 11. See also Appendix 8, Table I – III.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.: 9.

¹⁵² Ibid. Citation in original: “Fordelingen på mannlige og kvinnelige kandidater viser flere interessante trekk...de kvinnelige kandidater rykker for alvor inn i denne avdelingen in slutten av 20-årene, og det er disse kandidater som særlig setter sitt preg på utviklingen fra 1928 – 1940. Antall mannlige kandidater steg i denne perioden bare med 43,5% mens de kvinnelige kandidater økte med hele 670%, fra 20 i 1928 til 154 i 1940. Det største kull kvinnelige kandidater – 187 – gikk ut i 1943.”

The rising number of girls with a two-year-long business education throughout the 1930s corresponds in some respects with another demographic change, although one that was far from as vigorous as in France ten years earlier. In the words of Kari Melby, a Norwegian gender historian, the amount of unmarried women had never been as high as it was in the late 1920s and the early 1930s.¹⁵³ The population census of 1930 shows that 43, 2% of all women over 15 years old were unmarried, as opposed to 41, 5% thirty years earlier.¹⁵⁴ While these figures demonstrate only a very modest demographic transformation, they also conceal at the same time a new trend or pattern, both in terms of marriage and occupation. What really changed in the 1930s was that the high level of unattached women did not lead to an increase in female labor-market activity, as in the late nineteenth century, but rather to prolonged schooling among girls.

During the first half of twentieth century, women's occupational activity decreased from 35, 2% in 1900 to 26, 9% in 1940.¹⁵⁵ With the exception of the inter-war crisis, which affected the female labor force harder than the male, the decline of professional active women was sign of a more demographically balanced society. The male emigration to the US had almost stopped, and the mortality rates among men went down. By the end of the 1930s the ratio between the male and the female population almost out leveled, renewing women's possibilities – but also necessity – of relying on “home and marriage” as an economic solution. This caused a major shift in the patterns of matrimony away from a general low frequency of marriage and high wedding age, to the opposite. Most of the young women registered as “single” in the 1930 population census would, therefore, most likely marry at a later stage.

The high level of unattached women in 1930 had, accordingly, more to do with changing gender norms and practices among women than demography as such. Kari Melby explains the paradoxical development by the fact that schoolgirls attendance at school was independent of social class,¹⁵⁶ and so a larger part of the female population attended school longer. Life-long employment was, on the other hand, seldom the girls' *raison d'être* for continuing into upper-secondary education. Rising school attendance

¹⁵³ Melby, Kari (1999): 234. See also http://www.ssb.no/emner/hiistorisk_statistikk/tabeller/3-3-3t.txt

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 233.

¹⁵⁵ Sogner, Sølvi & Ida Blom (red. 1999): 345.

¹⁵⁶ Melby, Kari (1995): 404 – 405; (1999): 233 – 234, Kjeldstadli, Knut (1994): 112.

among girls was, instead, an unmistakable sign of the modernization and democratization of the Norwegian school system, which had started in the late-nineteenth century, but which entered a new and more forceful phase after 1905. That these socio-political processes benefited the vocational schools and colleges, in particular, shows moreover that the girls – and their families – were practically oriented.¹⁵⁷ As secondary training enabled them to find employment before getting married, prolonged school attendance was no real obstruction to marriage and mothering. On the contrary, the vocationally-oriented echelon of the Norwegian school system was a forceful representative and distributor of middle-class values, which enabled the bourgeois idea of the domesticated woman to find new space within the population.

The feminization of the commercial “high schools” in the late 1920s and the 1930s was thus part of a more general trend: more women tended to prefer shorter and more vocational types of secondary education that could secure employment until marriage. But, as shown in chapter 4, the business high schools were initially established to qualify young men, and not women, to enter clerical and managerial work within the commercial sector. With the feminization, this professional orientation changed.

Material concerning the business high schools is, in general, scarce, but there is a considerable drop in available sources after 1940.¹⁵⁸ Of course this does not mean that the professional value of the commercial *gymnasium* necessarily decreased immediately after it was feminized, but it seems as if it changed – or lost some of its status as an institution of higher degree.¹⁵⁹ Apart from some occupational overviews made just after the war, showing that candidates who graduated in the early 1920s were either running their own companies or working as directors and office managers in the commercial and financial industries, there is little information available on the professional value of the business gymnasium for women after World War Two. The only hard facts I have been able to

¹⁵⁷ Statistisk sentralbyrå; Tabell 5,11: “Graduates of general secondary schools, upper stage, 1813 – 1992” (http://www.ssb.no/emner/historisk_statistikk/tabeller/5-5-11t.txt), Kjeldstadli, Knut (1994): 112. The same tendency continued after World War Two. See Maria Giæver (1971): 7.

¹⁵⁸ See for instance Rolv Petter Amdam (1998): 81 – 82, where he emphasizes the importance of the business high schools as sources of management education for men until World War Two.

¹⁵⁹ The last one I have been able to come across is the one issued by the 1930-class at OHG: Elever uteksaminert i 1930 fra Oslo Handelsgymnasiums 2-årige avdeling (1955): *Festskrift. Utgitt til 25 års jubileet* (Oslo).

come across concerns the female candidates graduating before this time, published in various *Festschrifts*.

One of these volumes, handed out by the class graduating from the Oslo business school (OHG) in 1926, contains biographical data of two mercantile women and 106 men. And according to the information given, only one of the two had had a professional career, as a bookkeeper, until she married in 1935, a moment she recalls in the following way:

A turning point occurred in 1935 when my fate in the world of business was sealed with the traveling salesman [X] in the firm Chr. Thaulow A/S, Oslo. Since then I have practiced as a housewife – not too bad a profession, where 2/3 of the man's income is being taken good care of – in line with businesslike principles.¹⁶⁰

According to this female business graduate, wage work and marriage was looked upon as irreconcilable activities. She stopped working as soon as she got married. The lady was, however, not alone in holding such views or values at this time. Many firms and public offices practiced the marriage barrier in Norway in the inter-war period, which meant that female employees had to leave their work as soon as they got married.¹⁶¹ The municipality of Oslo imposed for instance the marriage barrier in 1928, and other communities followed soon after, as a result of the economic recession.¹⁶² If we, for instance, take a closer look at the *Festschrift* which was published by OHG's class from 1930, and issued in 1955, approximately half of the married female candidates had worked full-time since graduation. The most common positions they held were in lower administrative jobs such as secretaries, stenographers, or general office clerks.¹⁶³ Even if only half of the married women had children, those who were mothers had a commitment

¹⁶⁰ Elever uteksaminert 1926 fra Oslo Handelsgymnasium toårige avdeling (1951): *Festskrift utgitt til 25-års jubileet 1951* (Oslo): 85 Citation in original: "Et vendepunkt inntrådte i 1935, da min skjebne i forretningsverdenen ble beseglet av reisende [X] i firmaet Chr. Thaulow A/S, Oslo. Siden da har jeg praktisert som husmor – et ikke ueffent yrke, hvor 2/3 parter av mannens inntekt blir tatt behørig vare på – etter forretningsmessige prinsipper."

¹⁶¹ Lønnå, Elisabeth (1996): 114 – 115.

¹⁶² Kari Melby (1995) writes about similar practices in the teaching profession in the late-1920s and 1930s. The economic recession weakened the position of female teachers on the labor market, she argues, and several municipalities decided to install the marriage barrier and/or fire married women (278 – 279).

¹⁶³ Elever uteksaminert i 1930 fra Oslo Handelsgymnasiums 2-årige avdeling (1955): *Festskrift. Utgitt til 25 års jubileet* (Oslo): 66, 69, 71, 73, 79, 81, 82, 84, 90, 100, 106.

to work very similar to that which we saw in the foregoing chapter about graduates of École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF). Two of the women communicated, moreover, a firm feminist stand in the biographical interviews in the booklet.¹⁶⁴ When asked about their special wish for the coming year, one answered “That [the Norwegian Parliament] give me a jubilee present and nullifies joint income taxation of husband and wife!” while the other said: “...more women to the Parliament!”¹⁶⁵ This also brings up associations with the graduates of HECJF.

Joint income tax for married couples was the big subject of controversy in the 1950s, within and between the Labor Party and the NKF – the Norwegian feminist organization, as it made wage work economically unattractive for married women.¹⁶⁶ The dispute about married women’s right to work, to which this taxation referred indirectly, was an old one, dating back to the economic crises of the inter-war period. Married women’s right to work had until then been supported by the National Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Labor Party’s female secretariat, but it was an open secret that powerful groups within the labor movement and the party wanted married women out of the labor force, in order to secure employment for men.¹⁶⁷ The working law ratified in 1936, under the first “pure” Labor-Party rule in Norwegian history, provided men with far better legal protection against being fired than working women. As a result, the equality discourse, which had been embedded in the party in the 1920s and early 1930s, was replaced with a patriarchal model disguised as class loyalty. Married women’s right to work did not change for the better until 1959, when joint income tax for married couples was abolished and Norway ratified ILO’s convention on equal pay for men and women. At that point, 55% of all Norwegian women above 15 years-of-age worked at home, while the percentage of professionally active married women was only

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.: 69, 90.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. Citation in original: “At de gir meg en jubileumspresang: opphever samskatten!”, “...flere kvinner på tinget!”

¹⁶⁶ This rule was abolished in 1959, the same year as the Norwegian Government formed the Council for Equal Pay and ratified the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) convention on equality in remuneration (Elisabeth Lønnå, 1996: 170 – 171).

¹⁶⁷ For more on this issue see Elisabeth Lønnå 1975.

5, 4%.¹⁶⁸ No wonder that the Norwegian business school of Bergen had so few female applicants.

...And Its Limited Impact on the Recruitment to NHH

There was only one woman present among the 60 students accepted by NHH in 1936.¹⁶⁹ Her name was Anne-Johanne Loe, and according to an interview printed in the graduates' own journal *Bedriftsøkonomen* twenty years later, she never felt it was a problem being the only female candidate among the men.¹⁷⁰ "She was a good friend amongst friends, and neither her male fellow-students nor she felt it was a problem".¹⁷¹ However, the fact that gender did matter for the recruitment to NHH is both statistically and culturally evident. The number of women following in the footsteps of Miss Loe for a long time remained very low, and the cultural barriers to overcome to enter this new school were equally high. Until 1970, only 2% of the NHH graduates were women, which in total numbers represented 40 as opposed to 2,028 men.¹⁷²

One reason for the male dominance at NHH, apart from low interest among women, was strong competition for admission. Right from the start, there were many applicants for relatively few places. In the year when Loe first entered the school, there had been as many as 236 applicants for 60 vacant positions.¹⁷³ All the accepted candidates had for this reason already passed the *Ex-A*, although a business degree from one of the country's 7, (soon to become 10), business high schools in theory qualified one for admission to NHH.¹⁷⁴ That the actual practice was different from this theory is evident. The feminization of the commercial *gymnasium* in the 1930s had practically no

¹⁶⁸ Lønnå, Elisabeth (1996): 158 – 169.

¹⁶⁹ Tanderø, Nils (1989): 19 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*. The admission requirement was *Ex-A* or the final degree from a two-year-long business high school, like OHG. The number of applicants was 236 in the first years. See Appendix 13.

¹⁷⁰ *Bedriftsøkonomen* (2/1959): 102.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Citation in original: "Hun var en god kamerat blant kamerater, og hverken hennes mannlige studentskollegaer eller hun selv følte situasjonen som noe problem."

¹⁷² Brandt, Ellen (1986): 55, Tabell 1,6.

¹⁷³ The number of places available was at first 50, but 10 places were later added to meet the high demand for the program.

¹⁷⁴ For an overview of the number and names of commercial high schools before 1940, see Appendix 17, Table I. In 1950, the two-year-long commercial high schools were transformed into three-year long economic gymnasiums. This provided the graduates with right to entry into all university studies from 1956 onwards. In the same year the *Ex-A* was made compulsory for admission at NHH for all the younger candidates.

impact on the recruitment to the Norwegian business school in Bergen. Most of the young men accepted to NHH's two-and-a-half-, later three-year, course, had a background in science and mathematics from upper-secondary school, followed by a one-year intermediate business program, the so-called *studentfagkurset* (student track).¹⁷⁵

Oslo Commercial Gymnasium (OHG) had been the first institution to offer such a program in 1922, as a response to the growing number of high school graduation candidates (*artianere*) since the late 1910s.¹⁷⁶ According to A. E Holtsmark, the director of OHG after Polaczek, it had "become gradually more common to let young people take the university qualifying examination [*Ex-A*] before deciding what to do in life".¹⁷⁷ This suggests that upper-secondary education leading towards the *Ex-A* had become a kind of cultural "must" or "minimum" for certain social strata. The "student-track" of OHG, which offered an intermediate business education in one year instead of two, was a response to this change, and soon became a great success in terms of applicants. In the late 1920s, there were almost as many pupils applying for the so-called "student track" as for the original two-year-long program.¹⁷⁸ A large majority of the candidates were young men, however, a trend that was to continue for decades.¹⁷⁹ In the academic year 1953/54, for instance, only 9, 4% of OHG's student course were female students. The share was even lower nationwide – 8, 3%. The main reason for this was that there were fewer girls preparing for the *Ex-A* than boys, even though the total number of female students in upper-secondary education grew both before and after World War Two, especially in the Oslo area.¹⁸⁰ However, few of these female students continued beyond high school. And if they did, they tended to undergo a different kind of post-*gymnasium* training than their

¹⁷⁵ Giæver, Maria (1971): XV, vedlegg 4, a & b, Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986). NHH study program was of 3 years duration until 1975. It changed that year to 4 years, and is currently of 5 years duration.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.: 39, 43 – 44. The number of "*artianere*" (holders of the *Ex-A*) was still very small in relation to the population as a whole.

¹⁷⁷ Oslo Handelsgymnasium (1925): *Festskrift til femti års jubileet* (Oslo): 67 Citation in original: "...etterhånden blitt mer og mer almindelig å la unge mennesker ta artium før de bestemmer sig for valg av livstillig."

¹⁷⁸ According to Maria Giæver (1971: 44), there were 155 pupils for the two-year-long program at OHG in 1926 and 111 for the "student track".

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.: 91.

¹⁸⁰ Kjeldstadli, Knut (1994): 112.

male counterparts. For those women who were preparing for office work, the secretarial schools and courses would be a normal choice, not NHH.

The All-Male Spirit Reproduced among Students

Despite the few token females, like Anne-Johanne Loe, female business-school attendance was to confirm rather than challenge the male norm in the postwar period. The innovations of the 1920s, led by OHG but soon adopted by other schools, renewed moreover the gender division or distinction within the field of secondary business education, as much as between the lower and higher levels. This provided an excellent breeding ground for an all-male milieu at NHH – a milieu surprisingly similar to that which already existed at École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) in Paris. The material circumstances for the reproduction of the male business school ethos was, however, more modest in Bergen than in the French capital. There was a general skepticism about business education within the ruling elite of the Labor Party. For most social democrats, NHH was a bourgeois construction made by and for the middle class – a notion that Kr. Lehmkuhl's grand building project from the 1920s, to a large extent, confirmed. Consistent with the sketches made by Bredo Greve, a Bergen architect, NHH was initially thought of as a modern counterpart to the University of Oslo, and employed the neoclassical style.¹⁸¹ However, it was much larger. The building site, granted by the municipality in 1917, was located in the outskirts of the town, and made possible the building of a business school along the lines of the American campus model. According to Bredo's plan, NHH was to consist of several larger buildings arranged in a campus formation, which would host lecture halls, library and a laboratory along with dormitories for the students.

Weak state finances during the inter-war period prevented, however, the realization of Lehmkuhl's "American dream". Bredo's draft was left behind, and later replaced by a provisional – and highly modest – location next to the Bergen Museum.¹⁸² Two main buildings – *Muséplass 1* and *Christiesgate 20* – made up NHH's provisional location. All together, it contained a lecture hall, several classrooms, a study room,

¹⁸¹ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 61 – 62.

administration and a small library, as well as a tasteful salon. As in most institutions of higher learning, NHH also had room for social gatherings, and a student club was created shortly after its opening. The club was at first open to everybody at the school, teachers included, but as the graduates got their own alumni association – in 1939 – it adopted a more exclusive or private style, and was restricted to the college. But, this club-mentality never prevented the boys from inviting young ladies “inside” – for social gatherings.¹⁸³

The author Agnar Mykle has described NHH's gender culture and atmosphere in an intriguing way. In his autobiographical novel, *The Song of the Red Ruby* (1956), he gives an “insider's” perspective on both NHH and the hopeful young ladies attending its school dances and balls, through the main character Ash Burlefot, who is a student at NHH – or “The College” as it is called in the book. For girls of the lower-middle classes marrying a business graduate could mean considerable social and economical returns. In the book, Mykle describes this with a clear and calculating eye, seeing the situation as one which has potential advantages for both: “Just as Ash was after her marzipan body, she was only after a future head of department, manager, director or banker”.¹⁸⁴ But as Mykle recounts and Ash discloses his true self – as a “gay deceiver” – his power and control over the young woman becomes plain. The relationship between him and the “marzipan lady” was not a contract between equals, which ruining the young woman's dream of a future as “Mrs. Director”. Instead she had to be content with the short-lived pleasures that the world had to offer her.

He [Ash] understood that there would be no reproaches if he did not propose and lead her to the altar; it would be quite enough for her if he introduced her to the great world; actually she would be satisfied if he would take her as his partner to one of the dances or balls at the College; she had never been there, that was her great dream. ‘Yes,’ said Ash, ‘I’ll take you one Saturday’. He lied to her, openly and frankly.¹⁸⁵

Although Mykle's descriptions are fiction, their realistic nature can be assumed because of a number of points. One is the fact that Mykle once attended NHH himself. The *Song*

¹⁸² The Bergen Museum opened in 1825, and laid the ground for the foundation of the University of Bergen in 1946.

¹⁸³ Larsen, Eirinn (2003a): 174 – 176.

¹⁸⁴ Mykle, Agnar (1956/1961): 216.

of the *Red Ruby* is, therefore, enriched by or fueled with his own “lived” experiences. Reviewers and scholars have tended to stress the autobiographical aspect of Mykle’s literary production, partly because all his writings dealt with young men and their psychological relationship to the outside world.¹⁸⁶ Another proof of the book’s historical richness lies in the many scrapbooks left by the students at NHH. They match to a large extent Mykle’s fictional images.¹⁸⁷ The atmosphere at NHH hence was surprisingly similar to that of HEC in Paris, but also to its forerunner; i.e. OHG. In other words, the all-male spirit, embedded in the nineteenth-century bourgeois ideology of separate spheres, was far from dead among the students. What differed, however, was the business school’s public image, because unlike the OHG, NHH was supposed to be “strictly academic in character”.¹⁸⁸

NHH – An (Elite) School in Business Economics

Although the NHH was evidently a historical continuation of the commercial high schools which were established in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, it was looked upon as something new. It was, without doubt, the first *academic* business school in Norway, a situation that brought the school council abroad, in search of both professors and a suitable teaching model. General manager Torolv Scheie, who himself had a business degree from Germany, drew extensively on the German *Handelshochschule* tradition when defining the school’s curriculum. Another important individual in the early phase was associate professor Robert Kristensson, who was a Swede.¹⁸⁹ Before coming to Bergen in 1936, Kristensson had worked under Professor Oskar Sillén at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE).¹⁹⁰ Sillén was a former student of Eugen Schmalenback at the Cologne Business School – the founding father of German *Betriebswirtschaftslehre*.¹⁹¹ Accounting had been the foundation of Schmalenback’s efforts to make business practice into a “science” or *Wissenschaft*, and it was in many

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ See for instance the biography of Mykle written by Anders Heger (1999).

¹⁸⁷ BNHH, 90h001907: *K-7 Bulletin*, later only *Bulle*.

¹⁸⁸ Mykle, Agnar (1956/1961): 19.

¹⁸⁹ Norstrøm, Carl J. (1995): 412 – 413; (2000): 16 – 17.

¹⁹⁰ The Stockholm School of Economics was established in 1909, and was by that time the oldest business school in Scandinavia.

ways this scientific tradition that the school board decided to choose for the first academic business school of Norway, through personalities like Kristensson and Scheie. The first curriculum of NHH gave considerably weight to subjects of so-called business-economic “nature”, like accounting, cost-benefit analysis, finance, market economics, industrial accounting etc.¹⁹² During the first years, these branches of learning counted for almost 2/3 of the compulsory subjects in economics the first years.¹⁹³ The other part was devoted to macroeconomics.¹⁹⁴ However, from the academic year 1937/38, the first year professor Wederwang led the school, the weekly hours in theoretical macroeconomics increased somewhat.¹⁹⁵ Even though Wederwang was fairly more practical and micro-oriented than Frisch, he drew extensively on the scientific network just established in Oslo. The emphasis on political economy became considerable stronger at NHH than at any other business school in Scandinavia.¹⁹⁶

In the beginning, the professional contact between the Institute of Economics in Oslo and NHH in Bergen was quite extensive, and personnel were moved back and forth between them. The evident advantage of this institutional bounding was that it provided the newly-established business school with both academic and political legitimacy, at the same time as it gave the students access to the knowledge nourished by the economic and political elite. As earlier indicated, the “Oslo school of economics” gained considerable discursive power after 1945 by providing the technocratic regime created by the Labor Party with both policy solutions and graduates.¹⁹⁷ Until the neo-liberal shift of the early-1980s, political economists represented one of the most influential professions of the country. They epitomized, in the words of Rune Slagstad, the elite of the social-democratic technocracy of postwar Norway. This emphasis on scientific knowledge, as

¹⁹¹ Norstrøm, Carl J. (undated): 15.

¹⁹² Most of the literature being used in the first period came for this reason from Germany and Sweden. As a matter of fact, only a limited amount of the compulsory readings were Norwegian.

¹⁹³ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 280 – 281.

¹⁹⁴ The Norwegian term is *samfunnsøkonomi*, while Frisch’s version was called *sosialøkonomi*. In English this would be political economy.

¹⁹⁵ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 99. Wederwang was freed from his professorship at the University of Oslo in 1945, in order to become professor in economics at NHH.

¹⁹⁶ Engwall, Lars (1992). 9 credits or *vektall* out of 40 total was in economics (Olav Harald Jensen and Arnljot Strømme Svendsen 1986: 281).

¹⁹⁷ Slagstad, Rune (1998).

the foundation of authority and power, stood in sharp contrast to the French tradition of elite education.

Apart from the state-governed *grande écoles* of engineering like Polytechnique (X) and École des Mines, the only French institution comparable with the Department of Economics at the UiO was École Nationale d'Administration (ENA), created in 1945, on the initiative of General de Gaulle. There was, however, a fundamental institutional difference between the UiO and the ENA, and the ways in which the two came to serve the bureaucratic apparatus. Whereas ENA tended to emphasize selectivity – and still does – as a way of securing both the highest quality and commitment from its students, the Norwegian economists were primarily committed to a specific scholarship or body of knowledge.¹⁹⁸ Due to its institutional structure, as part of the university, the Department of Economics for long practiced an open-door policy, which basically meant that everybody could enter in so far as they had passed the university qualifying examination, i.e. the *Ex-A* in science, mathematics or economics. This does not mean, however, that its screening function was of no importance. Frisch had, from early on, articulated his vision of macroeconomic management to the political leadership, but his ambition had a scientific not a exclusive outlook. The importance of the Department of Economics in screening a bureaucratic elite was, for this reason, never as elitist the ENA or any of the other *grandes écoles* in France. Actually, the admission policies practiced by the NHH were largely more elitist than the ones set by Frisch and his department.

Right from the beginning, the NHH followed a “numerous clausus” admission policy. In Norway, this policy was normally practiced in relation to educational fields like engineering, medicine, veterinary and dental studies. For many of the university-educated professions, admission policies have played a part in a larger professional strategy for recognition and status. Medical doctors are in this sense the classical example. By practicing a hard selection procedure on admission, the medical profession managed to maintain or even increase their social status during the postwar period in Norway. At NHH, the “numerous clausus” policy had at first no such ambition.¹⁹⁹ Instead

¹⁹⁸ For more on the difference between the training of top-bureaucrats in France and Norway see Marte Mangset (2003); (2004).

¹⁹⁹ Olav Harald Jensen and Arnljot Strømme Svendsen 1986: 332 – 340, Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 249 – 252.

it was rooted in a certain material realism. Given the physical restrictions of the locality at Musépllass 1, it was, for a long time, impossible to increase the amount of students without exceeding the limitations imposed by the buildings and budgets.²⁰⁰ At NHH, the emphasis on selectivity as a professional strategy remained in fact invisible until the school moved out of town in 1963, to its new location in Breiviken. This relocation enabled the school to take in far more students than before, but the selectivity continued mainly because of rising demand for higher business education, but also because there was no will to employ more inclusive admission rules among students and staff. There was an increasing mismatch between the number of applicants and accepted students throughout the period, even if the student capacity increased slowly from 58 in 1961 to 175 in 1964 and 237 in 1970.²⁰¹ In 1985, the year that NHH's monopoly on the granting of the title "civil economist" came to an end, the school received 2494 applications for 300 places, which in fact was almost the same as at HEC five years earlier.²⁰² This "monopoly situation" strengthened the position of NHH as an elite institution in the Norwegian context, which made it relevant to the education of managers and not only skilled "professional specialists" of accounting and business administration.²⁰³ How could this happen in an equality-minded country like Norway?

Apparently, the social-democratic regime paid little attention to the field of business education in the early-postwar years. For a long time, NHH did not belong to the Ministry of Education but to the Ministry of Commerce. In accordance with mainstream Labor Party thinking, business education was not held in high esteem.²⁰⁴ It was seen as an inferior type of education, which sought at promoting strictly profitable interests. Unlike HEC, NHH's exclusive position was therefore more a result of public ignorance than of any explicit strategy. The political negligence shown to the subject by the Norwegian Labor Party until the mid-1960s, forced many students to enroll in private institutions, like the Oslo-based Institute of Business Economics (BI) or to study business economics

²⁰⁰ In the first year 60 students out of 236 applicants were accepted at NHH. For some reasons the selectivity decreased during the 1950s, but rose rapidly again in the 1960s.

²⁰¹ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 273, 330 – 331.

²⁰² Larsen, Eirinn (2003a): 151. In 1980, HEC received 2,522 applications for 264 places.

The Norwegian term is *siviløkonom*, and was originally a Swedish invention from 1943. NHH's graduates took on this title in 1953.

²⁰³ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1996): 22 – 23.

and administration abroad.²⁰⁵ Germany and Switzerland were at first popular countries for Norwegian youth in search for a higher business degree. Later many went to the US, but the business schools of neighboring countries like Sweden and Denmark have also educated many Norwegians.

The number of business graduates with foreign degrees increased rapidly after the war, along with the rising demand for higher education. In 1960, more than half of all Norwegian business graduates had studied abroad, a number that continued to be rather constant well into the 1980s.²⁰⁶ In 1966, Karl Borch, who was a professor of business economics, questioned the confined student capacity at NHH in *Bedriftsøkonomen*.²⁰⁷ It was a paradox, he wrote, that Norway was classified as a third-world country in terms of higher business education. At the business school of Mannheim, ironically named “Norway’s next-largest business school”, most of the foreigners were either Africans or Norwegians. This shameful situation was, however, unnecessary, Borch uttered. A program consisting mostly of lectures and self-tuition, like NHH, should not be a closed program.

The teaching at Norges Handelshøyskole is mainly based on lectures. It should therefore be possible to accept as many as 600 students annually. Not all of them would find space in the auditoriums, study halls and restaurants, but the conditions under which they study would never be as bad as abroad.²⁰⁸

According to Arnljot Strømme Svendsen, a former NHH professor, the senate at NHH took little notice of Borck’s criticism, or the fact that so many Norwegians left the country to study business economics, because of low domestic capacity.²⁰⁹ The students, who held two of the seats in the senate, were among the most conservative, and took a

²⁰⁴ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 432.

²⁰⁵ BI is currently known as the Norwegian School of Management.

²⁰⁶ Brandt, Ellen (1986): 130, Tabell 3, 12. None of them were women in 1960. We shall return to this issue in chapter 10.

²⁰⁷ BBI, *Bedriftsøkonomen* (6/1966).

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Citation in original: “Undervisningen ved Norges Handelshøyskole består vesentlig av forelesninger. Det skulle defor ikke være noe vensentlig i veien for å ta inn 600 studenter pr. år. Da ville ikke alle få plass i auditorier, lesesaler og kantiner, men de ville allikevel ikke få dårligere studieforhold enn om de hadde dradd til utlandet for å studere bedriftsøkonomi.”

²⁰⁹ Strømme, Arnljot Svendsen (1986): 329 – 342.

very protectionist stance towards the question of NHH as an open program.²¹⁰ The main argument for keeping the doors shut was that the quality of the teaching would drop if more students were allowed to enter.

Although a few within the faculty tried to initiate a more constructive debate on the question of admission, the stand of the students was never seriously challenged.²¹¹ Instead the school board continued to adopt a rather conservative course that enabled the staff to concentrate on increasing the school's academic reputation. The right to issue doctoral degrees was granted NHH in 1957. NHH's faculty had in addition an educational effect on the business high schools. Already in 1938, a specific teacher's degree had been created, qualifying the business graduates to teach business economics and economics to high-school pupils attending the commercial gymnasium. In 1950, this school changed, however, into a three-year long economic *gymnasium* with a syllabus adjusted to that of the NHH. Apart from general subjects like Norwegian, history, geography and foreign languages, the new gymnasium taught business economics in combination with political economy and jurisprudence.²¹²

The antagonists of the commercial gymnasium had long doubted the general educative value of the commercial disciplines, since a degree from one of the many existing business high schools did not qualify one for further studies. But with the arrival of the new authority; i.e. economics, this stand faded out. In the late 1940s, there was a gradual acceptance within the state bureaucracy that the concept of general *Bildung* had to change in accordance with the new needs of society.²¹³ The Central committee on the business high schools, approved by government in 1946, argued the following when presenting its final recommendations four years later:

In our days one can no longer say that only these and those subjects provide general education. On the contrary, political economy, jurisprudence and business economics are now generally

²¹⁰ Ibid.: 334.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² *Handel og kontor* (1950): "Økonomisk gymnasium" av Olaf Kran, Oslo Handelsgymnasium, 4.9.1950.

²¹³ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Instilling fra Den Departementale Handelsgymnaskomité, oppnevnt 2. mai 1946* (1949): 50. The Norwegian term for *Allgemeine Bildung* or general education is "allmenndannelse".

educative subjects of high quality. That they also give professional competence should not reduce their generally educative character or value.²¹⁴

With the curriculum reform undertaken in the early 1950s, the business high schools were put on equal level with the traditional gymnasium. This meant that business the graduates had the right to apply for all higher university studies, not only NHH and the Department of Economics at the UiO. Several of NHH professors, and particularly Arne Kinserdal, worked vigorously to upgrade the economic gymnasium in the late-1950s and early-1960s.²¹⁵ Kinserdal penned several textbooks in business economics for upper-secondary education. So did representatives from the Department of Economics at the UiO. Even professor Ragnar Frisch engaged in the transformation of the commercial high schools in the 1950s, concerned as he was about the occupational potential of the new economic profession.²¹⁶ In a letter addressed to the Central committee mentioned above he argued, "If one is to emphasize the political economic matters in the new economic gymnasium, the natural solution [to the question of teacher's qualification] has to be that the person teaching these subjects is a graduate of political economy".²¹⁷ In contrast, Frisch paid less, if any, attention to what had taken place within other parts of the new economic gymnasium, notably the "female sphere".

Secretarial Schools for Female Students

In 1941, the director of OHG, Kåre Foss, addressed the school's general board with the idea of reworking the female evening course created in 1878/79.²¹⁸ The main reason for his suggestion was the rising need for more specialized employees within the world of business. In a letter dated the 10th of October, Foss stated: "The existing evening course assumes a very general approach, whereas the demand for female office assistances

²¹⁴ Ibid. Citation in original: "I våre dager kan en ikke lenger si at bare de og de fag gir almindannelse. Tvert imot, sosialøkonomi, rettslære og bedriftsøkonomi er i dag almindannende fag av høy kvalitet. At flere av dem også gir direkte yrkeskompetanse, skulle ikke forringe deres almindannende karakter."

²¹⁵ Norstrøm, Carl J. (undated): 14 – 16.

²¹⁶ RA, 1251, 2/12: correspondence between the Central committee on the business high schools, led by Director Olaf Kran and the Department of Economics at the University of Oslo, led by Professor Ragnar Frisch.

²¹⁷ Ibid. Letter from Frisch to Kran dated the 24th of April 1950 Citation in Original: "Hvis en først skal legge vekt på de sosialøkonomiske ting i det nye økonomiske gymnasium, må den naturlige løsning være at for disse fags vedkommende kreves det at vedkommende er sosialøkonomisk kandidat."

within business has become very specialized”.²¹⁹ The business directors he had spoken to had identified this need in the following way: “One requires that they [the female secretaries] have an adequate diction, knowledge of English and German, possibly also French, as well as experience in stenography and typewriting”.²²⁰ The increasing demand for competent secretaries required, in Foss’ words, a reorganization of the school’s one-year-long evening program into a full-time “secretarial school for women”. Structurally, this implied an expansion of the weekly hours taught from 19 to 36, as well as an adjustment to a normal academic cycle, running from August to June.²²¹ Although the curricular components were more or less the same as before, the significance of the various disciplines had to change. According to Foss, the hours taught on subjects like business economics, accounting, bookkeeping and correspondence should be reduced substantially to the advantage of skills in foreign languages, stenography and typewriting.

Foss’ suggestion to reorganize the female evening course at OHG was approved by the local authorities in spring 1942, with the result that the school could even start the following term. OHG’s secretarial school for women thus was created during the German occupation. Herr Foss had abstained from taking any firm stand against the occupational authorities, and after the Liberation of Norway in May 1945, he had to leave his position as the director of OHG.²²²

His alleged collaboration with the Nazi regime might have made Foss’ contribution to the field of business education less known or embraced by the state authorities. The Central committee on the business high schools, appointed by the government in 1946, almost steered clear of mentioning it. The final report, issued four years later, referred to the female secretarial school of OHG with only a few, concise words:

²¹⁸ Letter dated the 10.10.1941 is referred to in Maria Giæver (1972): 65, footnote 1.

²¹⁹ Ibid. Citation in original: “Det nåværende ettermiddagkursus er lagt meget generelt an, mens behovet i forretningsverdenen og hele næringslivet for kvinnelig kontorhjelp er blitt meget spesialisert.”

²²⁰ Ibid. Citation in original: “En krever av dem at de skal ha en skikkelig språkføring, kjennskap til engelsk og tysk, eventuelt fransk, samt øvelse i å stenografere og skrive på maskin.”

²²¹ Giæver, Maria (1972): 69, Tabell 18. In Norwegian this school was called: *Oslo Handelsgymnasiums kvinnelige sekretærskole*.

²²² RA, 1251, 2/12: *Instilling fra Den Departementale Handelsgymnaskomite, oppnevnt 2. mai 1946* (1949): Bind VIII Citation in original: “å tilfredstille behovet for dyktige sekretærer.”

In 1942 the [OHG] abolished the [female evening course] to the advantage of a 'secretarial school' building on the exam from lower-secondary school. The magnitude of the program was extended. Simultaneously, a 'secretarial school', building on the high school certificate [Ex-A] was created. Both are of one-year duration.²²³

The first endeavor to regulate officially the female secretarial schools came in 1951 – almost ten years after their creation. But they would still continue to have a peripheral position within the field of business education.²²⁴ Unlike the economic gymnasium, which was defined as being the business high schools' official obligation, the secretarial course was defined as being optional. According to their statutory provisions, the business high schools had permission, but no obligation, to run secretarial courses for female students. Still, many of them chose to do so. The commercial high school of Fredrikstad (FHG), a small town, a two-hour ride south-east of Oslo, seems to have been the first to take on Kåre Foss' idea.²²⁵ In 1943, Fredrikstad got a school which emphasized the teaching of foreign languages (English and German) in combination with typewriting, stenography and basic business subjects like accounting, bookkeeping and office organization. The entry requirement was the lower-secondary degree which had been introduced in 1935, the so-called *realskoleeksamen*. But unlike its role model, the secretarial course run by FHG also welcomed men, and "[d]uring the first years, there was in fact a noticeable male element in the secretarial classes".²²⁶

The male attendance seems to have stopped as soon as the war was over, and Norwegian society returned to a kind of gender normality in areas like education and higher university studies. The secretarial programs which were established in the postwar period managed to attract only female students, even though the Central committee on the business high schools had acknowledged that "the secretarial courses building on the [Ex-

²²³ Ibid.: Bind I, 12 Citation in original: "I 1942 ble det nedlagt ved Oslo Handelsgymnasium, og omorganisert som 'sekretærskole', bygd på realskoleeksamen. Lesetiden ble utvidet. Samtidig ble det også opprettet en 'sekretærskole' bygd på artium. Begge er ett-årige." The term *realskoleeksamen* refers to a new secondary school exam being introduced in 1935, replacing the old "middle-school" exam from 1869.

²²⁴ Giæver, Maria (1972): 31.

²²⁵ *Fredrikstad Handelsgymnasium og Fredrikstad Handelsskole 1932 – 1957* (1957): 35.

²²⁶ Ibid. Citation in original: "I de første årene var det for øvrig et ganske merkbart mannlig innslag i sekretærklassene."

A] should be open to men”.²²⁷ Yet, the impact or power of this statement on men and women’s educational practices was low. Between 1943 and 1975, only two out of the 3730 graduates from OHG’s secretarial school happened to be male.²²⁸ The only thing that changed with official regulation was the official naming of the programs, at least with regard to those requiring the *Ex-A* degree. The commercial high school of Bergen decided, for example, to replace its female evening course in 1950 with what they called a “secretarial school for students”, indicating that merits and not gender was the program’s primary locus. A closer look at its institutional, not to say participatory, genesis shows nonetheless that “only female students visited the secretarial school” of BHG.²²⁹ The situation was the same at the commercial high school of Sandefjord, situated on the western side of the Oslo fjord and known for its extensive shipping and whaling industry. Whereas the official designation of this school was as a post-gymnasium institution for students of both sexes, the educational reality or practices were of another kind.²³⁰

The business high school of Trondheim (THG) exhibited yet another version of the same gender pattern. In the year 1949, THG launched two secretarial programs, each of one-year duration. The first was a “secretarial school for students”, while the other was defined as a “course for office girls”, and thus explicitly gendered female. The Central committee had no mandate to regulate or control the lower secretary programs. The business high schools were therefore not forced to comply with the request to have the program open to men as well as women. Over time, the lower courses would, however, disappear altogether.

The business high school of Oslo abolished the secretarial curriculum, which had built on lower-secondary school, as early as in 1946, due to low turnout.²³¹ The regional business high schools undertook similar changes, but they all occurred later than in Oslo.

²²⁷ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Instilling fra Den Departementale Handelsgymnaskomiteé, oppnevent 2. mai 1946* (1949): Bind VIII Citation in original: “sekretærkursen for studenter bygger på eksamen artium, og denne avdelingen bør etter komiteens mening også stå åpen for menn.”

²²⁸ Larsen, Eirinn (2003a): 167.

²²⁹ *Bergen Handelsgymnasium 1904 – 1954* (1954): 113 – 114 Citation in original: “Sekretærskolen har bare vært besøkt av kvinnelige studenter.”

²³⁰ *Sandefjord Handelsgymnasium 1917 – 1967* (1967): 12. The wording used in this document is “a one-year long secretarial school for students” (*ett-årige sekretærskole for studenter*).

²³¹ Syvertsen, Haakon et al (1975): 158.

For instance, the secretarial course of FHG transformed into a “secretarial school for students” in 1950/51, while THG abolished its one-year-long program for office girls as late as in 1961.²³² One explanation for this geographical difference was the fact that high-school attendance among girls was higher in the capital than elsewhere. This reduced the market for the lower-secretarial course in Oslo compared to smaller towns like Fredrikstad or even Bergen. As a matter of fact, interest in the evening course run by the OHG was already in rapid decline at the moment in which Kåre Foss suggested reorganizing the female program.²³³ In the 1930s, many Oslo girls preferred OHG’s two-year long fulltime course – a pattern that was further reinforced by the educational law of 1935. OHG’s director, in contrast, interpreted the feminization of the commercial high schools not as a result of changing educational practices among girls, but as a rising belief that a two-year-long business degree would provide them with better work opportunities.²³⁴ Foss believed that girls’ growing demand for “male education” was misjudged. Neither the day program nor the “vocational student course” run since 1922 had satisfied the girls’ educational needs: “these courses do not provide the ideal vocational training for most of the girls”, he said in his 1941 recommendation.²³⁵ The girls made, in his words,

Constant complains of those subjects that most of the boys tend to like, such as political economics and jurisprudence. [Besides] society is in deep need of qualified female office subordinates, particularly in the area of clerical work.²³⁶

The quotes display well the professional intention of OHG’s secretarial school; i.e. to educate women to lower – or subordinate – work in the business hierarchy by “providing a [...] limited and specialized introduction to the practices of

²³² *Trondhjems Handelsgymnasium, Trondheim Økonomiske Gymnas, Adolf Øiens Skole, 1913 – 1988* (1988): 77, *Fredrikstad Handelsgymnasium og Fredrikstad Handelsskole 1932 – 1957* (1957): 36.

²³³ Giæver, Maria (1972): 65.

²³⁴ Letter dated the 10.10.1941 is referred to in Maria Giæver (1972): 66, footnote 1.

²³⁵ Ibid. *Citation in original*: “disse kursene gir ikke den ideelle opplæring for de fleste av pikene.”

²³⁶ Ibid. *Citation in original*: “De klager stadig over fag som mange av guttene setter pris på, f.eks. sosialøkonomi og rettslære. Samfunnet trenger i høy grad kvalifisert kvinnelig kontorhjelp særlig i de utpregede kontorlag.”

administration”.²³⁷ By so doing, the secretarial course created by Foss had clear professional limitations as well as an evident gendered explanation. Unlike the student course set up in 1922, which aimed at educating middle-management personnel by giving a “broad and general introduction to the theory of economics” to men, the secretarial schools linked women to practical or manual office work.²³⁸ This complemented or even reinforced the gendered division of labor within the office. It locked, so to speak, the female business graduates within the occupational category of “secretary”, whereas the male candidates had access to other work categories by virtue of their superior qualifications. Some even applied for admission at NNH.

The one-year vocational business program for students became one of the most common routes into higher business studies in Norway in the postwar period, in combination with a high school specialization in mathematics and sciences. Most girls attending the “secretarial schools for students” had, on the other hand, a specialization in language, having attended the so-called “English course” at high school. As explained in the proceeding chapter, this was also the case for the girls attending the *École de Haut Enseignement pour les Jeunes Filles* (HECJF) in Paris.

Improving Efficiency and Femininity among Secretaries

In 1951, the Central committee of the business high school initiated a reorganization of the secretarial schools.²³⁹ One of the questions which were addressed during this work, which lasted for more than three years, was the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge in the training of female secretaries. In line with Kåre Foss’s notion of the term, a female secretary was a specialist of practical office work, and thus in need of practical skills, not theoretical knowledge. The evaluation undertaken by the Central committee in the early 1950s questioned, however, this curricular imbalance. According to a statement provided by the OHG, the girls revealed a general lack of knowledge in elementary social studies and economics, a problem shared by other secretarial schools,

²³⁷ Giæver, Maria (1972): 118 Citation in general: “vekt på en forholdsvis snever og spesiell innføring i handelspraktiske fag.”

²³⁸ Ibid. Citation in original: “en bred og general introduksjon i økonomisk teori.”

²³⁹ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Forslag til ny leseplan for sekretærskolen*, Oslo 16.01.1954.

and which reduced the secretaries' usefulness.²⁴⁰ To compensate for this evident shortage of theoretical knowledge, the commission suggested introducing new subjects to the female secretary program. Sociology, political economics, or even the regular reading of newspapers in class were recommended as ways of improving the girls' intellectual capacity, and the business high schools agreed.²⁴¹ All directors reported back that they were greatly in favor of the idea, as "the pupils' acquaintance with economic terminology" increased their efficiency as stenographers.²⁴²

This univocal emphasis on the importance of theoretical knowledge, dressed in utilitarian language, still had little impact on the syllabus of the secretarial schools. In the years to come, the weekly hours taught in business economics, or other theoretical subjects, did anything but increase. On the contrary, it decreased. After the Central committee rearranged the study program in 1954, business economics in fact accounted for only 24% of the subjects, as opposed to 32% beforehand.²⁴³ On the other hand, the proportions of practical subjects like foreign language and office skills had increased. In accordance with the 1954 schedule, the secretarial schools were supposed to teach 6 hours typewriting and 6 hours stenography per week, while the hours in foreign languages — German, French and English — were 5 each. In total, this represented 76% of the program, indicating that nothing actually changed in terms of improving the young girls' understanding of more complex social and economical issues. The imbalance between the practical and the theoretical disciplines simply grew with the new schedule which was proposed and accepted in 1954. Mr. Kran, the head of the Central committee of the high schools, justified the adjustment in the following way:

A main target with the adjustment of the secretarial school has to be that it can educate competent secretaries that really known how to take shorthand and typewrite. Our current secretaries do not

²⁴⁰ Ibid. At this time there were 12 "secretarial schools for students" in Norway, run by the business high schools of Oslo, Bergen, Drammen, Fredrikstad, Hamar, Haugesund, Kristiansand, Sandefjord, Trondheim, Tønsberg, Stanvanger and Volda.

²⁴¹ Ibid.: 2.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Giæver, Maria (1972): 72, Tabell 19. In weekly hours taught, this accounted for 9 as opposed to 12 beforehand.

have these skills, and Norwegian corporate life will no longer do with the fact that we do not provide the secretaries with a better education.²⁴⁴

Given the academic path chosen by NHH, this curricular underpinning of the secretarial subjects like stenography and typewriting increased the gap between male and female business education in postwar Norway. While the male graduates had access to the “new authority”; i.e. economics, through which they could climb the managerial hierarchy, the knowledge base of the secretarial school could hardly move the female graduates beyond the typewriter. In other words, the two-sex model seemed unbreakable, even though the cultural discursive embedding of the gender differences was far more technically or utilitarian framed in Norway than in France. In relation to Norwegian political culture, excluding women from institutions of higher education because of their sex was illegitimate, but few claimed men’s right to access the “female sphere”. Although the secretarial schools were obliged to take on a more gender-neutral admission policy, the womanliness of the curriculum just increased by taking on more hours of stenography, typewriting and foreign languages.

Another place where the femaleness of the secretarial schools was maintained or even increased after 1954, was in respect to the guidelines for physical education, which taught the female pupils “correct and incorrect behavior, and the art of ‘conducting oneself’”.²⁴⁵ Ahead of the reform, some schools had suggested erasing this class in order to find more time for typewriting, but the Central committee on the business high schools decided to keep it, though reducing the weekly hours from two to one. The main reason for this, according to the committee, was the need for relaxation of strained arm and neck muscles: “...it would be unfavorable to let the classes in physical education go completely, because they make up a natural counterbalance against the tendency of muscular tension, which often occurs among the students of the secretarial schools”.²⁴⁶ But the concern for the girls’ physical health was still not the only reason why the Central

²⁴⁴ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Forslag til ny leseplan for sekretærskolen*, Oslo 16.01.1954 Citation in original: “Et hovedmål ved omleggingen av sekretærskolen må være at skolen for fremtidige skal kunne utdanne sekretærer som virkelig kan stenografere og skrive skikkelig på maskin. Det kan ikke våre sekretærer i dag, og norsk næringsliv er ikke lenger tjent med at vi ikke gir sekretærene bedre utdanning på dette området.”

²⁴⁵ RA (Norsk avisklipp): *Morgenbladet* (13.01.1954), (05.07.1956).

²⁴⁶ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Forslag til ny leseplan for sekretærskolen*, Oslo 16.01.1954: 6.

committee decided to maintain it. There was in fact also an outspoken gendered explanation to it – the secretaries' *female* appearance. As a matter of fact, this aspect of the training was stressed even more with the reform, or as the chair of the Central committee on the high schools put it:

Apart from physical exercises, the teacher of physical education should in the future also teach the students correct carriage and gait as well as giving them necessary knowledge in general hygiene, diet, clothing, look, etiquette and behavior.²⁴⁷

This appeal was to large extent followed. An article in *Morgenbladet* from 1956 is one telling example. A female teacher of physical education at OHG, Eva Brun, explains why: "We always start out with relaxation," she recounts.

but [I] also teach the pupils how to sit and walk how they should act in the office and in the world of business more generally. We emphasize the use of the voice. An agreeable and cultivated telephone voice is an important asset for a secretary. So is the skin, for which reason [I] give advice about make-up.²⁴⁸

The last citation is interesting for at least two main reasons: On the one hand it indicates that the gendered guidelines of the Central committee were followed up in practice. The teacher, Eva Brun, taught in fact what Olaf Kran and his committee had decided upon. Secondly, it gives an idea of the role of gender in the social construction of the professional category of "secretary", and the ways in which the business high schools, as well as Norwegian authorities, contributed to this process. That is not to say that it was up to these institutions or actors to decide what a secretary was. As already shown, both in relation to the Norwegian and the French cases, the definition of this role had taken place

²⁴⁷ Ibid: Citation in original: "Etter min mening vil det være uheldig helt å gi slipp på gymnastikkundervisning fordi den utgjør en naturlig motvekt mot den tendens til muskelspenning som ofte forekommer hos sekretærskolens elever. Faget bør derfor opprettholdes med i alle fall 1 time pr. uke slik at elevene kan få lære den nødvendige avslapping... Foruten at gymnastikklæreren skal ha til oppgave å drive avslappingsøvelser, innøve holdning og gang hos elevene, bør hun også for fremtiden få til oppgave å gi dem nødvendige kunnskaper i almen hygiene og om kosthold, klær, utseende, takt og opptreden."

²⁴⁸ RA (Norsk avisklipp): *Morgenbladet* (05.07.1954) Citation in original: "Vi begynner med avslapping. Vi lærer elevene hvordan de skal sitte og gå, hvordan de skal oppføre seg på kontor og i forretningslivet. Stemmebruk har vi også. En behagelig og kultivert telefonstemme er et aktivum for en sekretær. Likeså er huden. Vi gir derfor tips om hvordan man legger en make-up."

long before the 1950s. However, the educational council appointed by government in 1951 pursued this tradition through a discourse of efficiency and productivity.²⁴⁹

By improving the weekly hours taught in typewriting and stenography, as well as by pinpointing the various female qualities needed in order to make a good secretary, like walking, figure, skin, etc, Olaf Kran and his committee tried to increase the professional value of the female candidates. And that there was a market for rapidity and femininity is clear. According to various articles in press in the 1950s, the girls had no problems finding work.²⁵⁰ Most of the candidates got job offers even before graduation, and could easily earn about 600 – 700 NOK per month. Some even started off with a monthly salary of 1000 NOK, which according to the current prices was considered to be a good salary for a woman, though considerable lower than that obtained by most graduates of NHH.²⁵¹ Roughly speaking, a NHH graduate would normally earn more than the double of a female secretary. This privileged position of NHH, was also commented on by foreigners. When the Dean of Carnegie Institute of Technology, E. Dunlap Smith, was invited to Norway in 1953 to conduct a study on higher education and productivity, he was impressed by the fact that so many graduates from NHH, but also the Norwegian Technical University (NTH), were employed as top managers in their first jobs after graduation.²⁵²

The Making of the 'Civil Economists'

Despite the corporate success of civil economists in postwar Norway, there are few if any available studies on how the NHH – and its alumni association – went about providing the graduates with a professional identity or “self”. As we explored in the foregoing chapter, Pierre Bourdieu’s work contains a vast interpretation of the successes of some French business schools like HEC. With a point of departure in his theory of cultural

²⁴⁹ RA, 1251, 2/12: *Forslag til ny leseplan for sekretærskolen*, Oslo 16.01.1954. It seems as if there was a connection between the productivity drive and the reform of the secretarial programs. However, it is difficult to say how tight the link was, but in the years after 1954 the productivity drive manifested itself in several suggestions to improve the teaching of typewriting and to standardize the stenographical systems in use. The Oslo stock market exchange and the Norwegian Parliament operated, for instance, with two different systems.

²⁵⁰ RA (Norske avisklipp): *Morgenbladet* (13.01.1954, 05.07.1956), *Sunnmørsposten* (31.07.1954).

²⁵¹ NSF, Lønnsstatistikk 1950 – 1980.

²⁵² Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gunar Yttri (1998): 129.

reproduction, he shows how HEC managed to curtail and dominate other business schools, of which some were older, through imitating the institutional logic and culture of the more prestigious and “grand” engineering schools.

The only study in Norway that comes close to this fruitful reading of the business schools is the master’s thesis of Vidar Lidtun, which emphasizes the formation of the civil economic profession since 1945, and the importance of general management as a strategy of professionalism.²⁵³ In this thesis, prepared in accordance with the scholarly requirements of the social sciences, Lidtun pays considerable attention to the alumni association of NHH – which changed name from the “Norwegian Association of Business Economics (NBF)” to the “Association of Norwegian Civil Economists (NSF)” in 1953/54.²⁵⁴ The second half of Lidtun’s thesis is devoted NHH as an institution of higher business learning, although he later concludes that the school had little impact on the professional branding of the business graduates apart from the teaching of the new legitimate knowledge: economics.²⁵⁵

NHH’s choice to accentuate business economics as an education, rather than a profession, resulted, in Lidtun’s words, from the need to gain academic reputation and political acceptance for a school lacking institutional legitimacy in general. The introduction of academic criteria, on the other hand, took NHH away from the internal labor market of the firm.²⁵⁶ This created a gap between business economics as a field of knowledge and as a field of practice, with the consequence that the process of “professional branding” was more or less left to the graduates themselves to construct.

The graduates organized in the NBF/NSF generally did two things in order to improve their own professional value, Lidtun writes: First, by safeguarding the name and title of the school and its graduates in relation to graduates from the private, vocational business school BI, and secondly, by acting as a mediator for American-based

²⁵³ Vidar Lidtun prepared his thesis at the Department of Administration and Organizational Studies at the University of Bergen in 1995. Lidtun, Vidar (1995): *Formingen av den norske siviløkonomprofesjonen etter 1945: Ledelsesteori som profesjonsstrategi* (Hovedoppgave, Institutt for Administrasjon og Organisasjonsvitenskap)

²⁵⁴ *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år* (1989): 28. The adjective “Norwegian” was added in 1947. Before this, i.e. between 1939 and 1947, the association was named the “Association of Business Economics”.

²⁵⁵ Lidtun, Vidar (1995): 255.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 255.

management knowledge.²⁵⁷ The latter strategy, visible for the first time in the late 1950s, was rooted in a professional endeavor to define civil economists as managers. This aspiration was mainly expressed through the association's own journal, *Bedriftsøkonomen*, in the form of articles on management where the link between higher business education and managerial responsibilities was stressed more or less explicitly.²⁵⁸ A different expression of the very same strategy, was its engagement in management training, either of its own members or of businessmen in general. From the late-1960s and throughout the 1970s, this activity was particularly strong. A telling example here, recounts Lidtun, was the association's decision to support the creation of a private management education center in 1970.²⁵⁹ This Oslo-based institution called the North European Management Institute (NEMI), aimed at providing post-experience management training *à la* Harvard.²⁶⁰ The attempt was a major failure, however, and closed down only few years after being established.

The alumni's power or influence in the making the civil economists into managers should, however, not be overvalued, Lidtun writes in his conclusion. The group's development and success was to a large extent defined by its social, political and economical context. "The profession [of civil economist] is in this respect a knowledge typology socially structured (by the social, political and economic order it was included in) rather than constructed (as an individual actor with freedom to perform on behalf of itself)."²⁶¹ The state and the firm were, according to Lidtun, the two most important actors or forces within this order. Whereas the firm was an arena wherein the graduates could show off their capacities, not only as specialists of business economics, but also as managers, the state provided the business graduates with an unintended exclusivity by simply ignoring the need for increased student capacity within the field, Lidtun argues.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.: 188, 199. Established as a vocational evening school through private initiative in 1943, this Oslo-based institute developed into a domestic – though inferior – alternative to NHH during the postwar period. The school got its own graduate association in 1948; i.e. *Bedriftsorganisatorisk forening*. For more on BI see Rolv Petter Amdam (1993); (1998). For a comparison of BI and NHH see Ragnhild Kvålshaugen, Agnete Vabø & Eirinn Larsen (2003) and Eirinn Larsen (2003b).

²⁵⁸ BBI, *Bedriftsøkonomen* (1939 – 1980).

²⁵⁹ Lidtun, Vidar (1995): 258.

²⁶⁰ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1999): 44.

²⁶¹ Lidtun, Vidar (1995): 263 Citation in original: "Siviløkonomprofesjonen er i den forstand en kunnskapstypologi som er strukturert (preget av den orden den gikk inn i) heller enn konstruert (som aktør med 'frie' handlingsmuligheter)."

The professional value of the civil economists hence was restricted to changes which took place within – and outside – the firm, on the one hand, and the governmental corridors, on the other hand. The fact that a civil economist was for a long time a “rare thing” seemed in particular to have had a positive effect on the title’s professional value. This latter situation, characterized by an increasing mismatch between demand and supply of higher business education domestically, later gave space for BI to grow and develop into a “second” national business school, although the political climate for a long time was relatively hostile towards private involvement in higher education.²⁶²

Lidtun is right to restrict the “self-constructive” significance of the alumni association to the question of naming or titling. The growing importance of the civil economists as top-managers in the late 1960s and 1970s was, as stated in chapter 1, a result of changes within the social and economical order, upon which the graduates themselves had little influence or power. The most concrete example of such larger transformations related to a major shift in the ways in which managerial control was thought of and practiced in firms. Although some civil economists were already in positions of power and so could influence this shift, the growing emphasis on organization and financial control in the late-1960s was at least beyond the power of the NBF/NSF. Labeling, on the other hand, was not. But to argue that BI was the primary locus for this activity, as Lidtun does in his master’s thesis, is far from evident, at least at the beginning of NHH’s existence. BI was established seven years after NHH, i.e. in 1943, and provided at first only shorter (evening) courses in business economics and industrial administrative subjects in Oslo. The initial effort to provide the graduates of NHH with a professional title and identity commenced therefore before BI even existed, and was thus available as the associations’/graduates’ explicit “other”. Lidtun’s interpretation of the labeling process; as something that took place between NHH and the “inferior” BI, is therefore historically unsatisfactory. It simply overlooks what took place before the 1960s, and the fact that BI managed to become a serious provider of higher business education in the Oslo area.²⁶³

²⁶² Amdam, Rolv Petter (1993), Larsen, Eirinn (2003b): 161.

²⁶³ Ibid., Fjell, Tore J. (1989): 172 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*.

“Already the day after the opening of NHH, the 7th of September 1936, the title ‘commercial candidate’ was examined minutely by the students in a meeting held in auditorium number 1”.²⁶⁴ The essence of the students’ objection to the label given to them by the authorities was that the title “commercial candidate” restricted their working possibilities by not giving a clear idea about what type of work they could do, and where in the professional hierarchy they would operate. It gave additionally an idea of their gender.²⁶⁵ Because, as the adjective “candidate” restricted the graduates to specific types of jobs, like accountants, the term “commercial” tied them to the expanding – and highly unspecified – group of functionaries or white-collar workers, of which many were women. In March 1942, the editor of *Bedriftsøkonomen* wrote the following:

The other day, a larger company advertised for a young lady (20 – 25 years of age) good at typewriting and stenography, preferably a ‘commercial candidate’. Needless to say, we are not getting fonder of this title.²⁶⁶

Consistent with the editor’s view, the female connotation of the term “commercial candidate” meant it was a bad strategy for professional recognition. In line with one of the former presidents of the alumni, the title never corresponded “to our sure expectation of a position as managing director a few years after graduation”.²⁶⁷

Before analyzing the graduates’ ways of overcoming an unrecognized label, we have to take a quick look at the social position of white-collar workers in Norway. As in France, business graduates formerly belonged to the fast-growing class of salaried business employees, who suffered from social devaluation as well as feminization in the years before World War Two.²⁶⁸ This social turmoil had a profound impact on the NHH-graduates’ strategy for professional recognition through labeling.

²⁶⁴ Tanderø, Nils (1989): 21 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*, Citation in original: “Allerede dagen etter åpningen den 7. september 1936 ble ‘handelskandidat’ saumfart av det første kull på et møte i auditorium nr. 1.”

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ BBI, *Bedriftsøkonomen* (Mars 1942): 2 Citation in original: “Et større firma averterte forleden etter en ung dame (20 – 25 år) flink i maskinskriving og stenografi, helst handelskandidat. Vi blir fremdeles ikke gladere for denne tittel.”

²⁶⁷ Tanderø, Nils (1989): 21 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*, Citation in original: “Den svarte heller ikke til våre sikre forventninger om en eller annen generaldirektørstilling et par år etter eksamen.”

²⁶⁸ Filseth, Tyge (1989): 60 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*.

Business Graduates as White-Collar Workers

White-collar workers belong to an unexplored chapter of Norwegian social history. Apart from some specialized studies of a few middle-class professions (teachers, midwives, policemen, post office employees), Norwegian historiography has few if any studies of the salaried bourgeoisie – or, later, the new middle-classes. Lars Thue's commissioned work on the labor unions of clerical staff employed by the local authorities is in fact among the very few historical works which give an account of the rise of this new segment in society.²⁶⁹ The picture painted by him is still quite similar to what is known about this class – or classes – in other countries. Like in most other industrializing societies, there was a major shift of employment in Norway from the primary to the secondary and tertiary sectors during the first half of the twentieth century.²⁷⁰ Manufacturing was at first the most important labor market for adult men, apart from agriculture, but the expanding service sector was nearly as important for male employees by the end of the postwar period – a lot they shared with Norwegian women. This resulted, as Thue states, in a sound growth in the number of functionaries and general office workers between 1890 and 1950, and a strong, though highly uneven, commitment to organizational activities among white-collar workers.

Norwegian business functionaries were, therefore, never a homogenous group. As expected, they differed in terms of education, position, responsibility, gender and material wealth. This socio-economic diversity represented, needless to say, bad conditions for loyalty and solidarity with each other. In fact, the "office" with its privileged working hours and clothing, was for a long time the only thing this group had in common.²⁷¹ The early attempts to organize collectively thus related to these few commonalities: The most important issue for most white-collar unions before World War One was statutory working rules concerning employment and dismissal. Another was a reasonable pension system for functionaries.

But with the postwar speculation, and the following inter-war depression, the working conditions for Norwegian white-collar workers changed dramatically. With

²⁶⁹ Thue, Lars (1986).

²⁷⁰ Sogner, Sølvi & Ida Blom (red. 1999): 346 – 437, Tabell 2 & 3.

²⁷¹ Thue, Lars (1986).

rising unemployment in a period of high costs of living, along with a considerable radicalization and polarization of the political landscape, the functionaries felt socially and politically disregarded, not to say betrayed. As the workers achieved many of the same welfare privileges as the functionaries, such as reasonable pension schemes, the social and material differences between white- and blue-collar workers decreased.²⁷² Many of the Norwegian business functionaries felt, therefore, socially devaluated by the end of the 1930s, like their French counterparts. They had all started out as part of the middle-class, with certain material and social privileges, but found themselves – during the recession – suddenly part of the working class. Or put in the words of a character in the novel *The Office*, published in 1942 by Hans Geelmuyden:

I commenced as part of the well-to-do middle class, and landed accidentally as a full-grown among the proletariats. It is time to start climbing back at the level where I started, and where my father and all his male friends are standing.²⁷³

The resolve to collective action and solidarity within the group was still very weak until 1936.²⁷⁴ As stated by Lars Thue, most functionaries were against the methods used by the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), such as walk outs, and insisted on the right to their own representation during wage negotiations with the business employers, represented by the Norwegian Employers' Association (NAF).²⁷⁵ Thus, the values or ideologies of the functionaries were, to a large extent, the opposite of the workers. Whereas the LO talked about solidarity within the working class regarding wages and working hours, the functionaries claimed the right to individual wage agreements in accordance with skills and education, work experience and responsibility. White-collar workers were, moreover, far more loyal to the employer and the firm than workers were at this time. "We don't want the workplace primarily to be like a battle,

²⁷² Ibid.: 42.

²⁷³ Geelmuyden, Hans (1942): 49 Citation in original: "Jeg begynte i den bedrestilte mellomstand, og plumpet plutselig helt ned i proletariatet da jeg ble voksen, og må begynne å kare meg dit jeg startet, der min far og alle hans venner står."

²⁷⁴ Thue, Lars (1986): 9.

²⁷⁵ LO and NHH, established in 1899 and 1900 respectively, are still the two main sides of Norwegian industry.

characterized by quarrels and conflicts. We want it to be colored by happiness and comfort.”²⁷⁶

Prudence and correct behavior were key values of the business functionaries. The article “Good rules for proper conduct in the office”, published in the journal *Vi Kommunale* (*We Civic*) in 1938, is a telling example of the importance of such values.²⁷⁷ The eight rules listed, all of which referred to the functionaries as a specific social-professional group, were phrased in a correct tone and syntax. “All employees should address each others with Mr. or Misses” and “‘hi-hello-like’ behavior among functionaries is as reprehensible in a business environment as a couch or a pair of slippers are.” “Businesses should always be carried out in a cold, impersonal tone”, and the functionaries should “not dress in an eccentric way”.²⁷⁸

Self-imposed rules of the kind mentioned above were evident elements of the white-collar workers’ search for social and professional respect and legitimacy at the end of the inter-war period. But the cultural challenges and obstacles to increased recognition were many – above all the deep-seated Norwegian egalitarianism, but also the coming social-democratic hegemony created after World War Two. The functionaries’ emphasis on professional differentiating and social mobility according to talent and intellectual capabilities made them a “weak” partner in the economic and political life in pre- and postwar Norway. Rather than working their way towards common agreements and credentials, they relied on individual contracts, arrangements and even titles. The emerging discussion on labeling in 1936 among students at NHH was hence completely in line with the politics of the white-collar workers. As the title had no recognition within the business reality, the strategy was to change it for something better. Thus, in the years to come, the alumni association – the Norwegian Association of Business Economics (NBF) – did what it could to find a suitable, but also marketable, alternative to the title “commercial candidate”.

²⁷⁶ *Vi Kommunale* (16.07.1938): 3.

²⁷⁷ *Vi Kommunale* (12.11.1938): “Gode regler for hvordan man skal optre på kontor”.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. Citation in original: “Alle bør tiltale hverandre med herr eller frøken”, “‘hei på deg’-aktig opptreden er like forkastelig i en forretning som en divan eller et par tøfler”, “Forretninger skal alltid foretas i en kjølig upersonlig tone”, “Ingen outreret påklædning.”

Gaining Power through Professional Imitation and Nordic Cooperation

Although the NBF (later NSF) was much more than a workers' federation, it did raise many of the questions put forward by labor unions, like minimum wage, working rights, insurance and placement opportunities. The last issue, concerning the business candidates' careers also put the association in conflict with the authorities. In fact, the alumni never got the authorization needed to run a placement office, which, for example, existed in relation to the French business schools. Instead it had to rely on a cooperative agreement with the employment agency of Oslo, where the alumni association now was located.

Soon after its creation in Bergen, the NBF moved to the capital – well aware of the fact that the working opportunities for business graduates would be far better in Oslo than in the old “metropolis” on the western coast. And it was in many ways as part of the same concern – work – that made labeling a question for the alumni association during the war.

The term “commercial candidate” brought, as stated, major dissatisfaction and occasioned much complaint among the graduates. Its simple undertone corresponded in no way with the candidates' own professional ambitions, and during a club meeting on the 28th of May 1943, the NBF decided to make a request to its members about adapting a new title.²⁷⁹ The suggested label was “cand.merc”, retaining in addition the designation “candidate”. Of the 98 answers given, 69 voted for the new title, while 21 were against. Thus, from 1943 onward, the members of the NBF carried the title “cand.merc.-candidate”.²⁸⁰ But where did this rather odd name come from? Apart from the label “merc”, in which was a short name for the Greek goddess of commerce; i.e. *Mercury*, “cand” made direct references to the upper level of the Norwegian system of higher education. For example, the formal title of graduates of the economics profession was “cand.oecon.”, while graduates of law were referred to as “cand.jur.”, historians “cand.philol.” and the future generation of social scientists as “cand.polit.”. There are, however, good reasons to believe that the business graduates could not care less about the

²⁷⁹ Tanderø, Nils (1989): 21 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*.

²⁸⁰ In 1950, the alumni association had 511 members of whom 70 had a business degree from abroad. In 1970, 563 out of 2,114 members held foreign business degrees (Nils Tanderø, 1989: 41).

academic "guilds" of historians. More important was the wish or desire to connect with the economists educated within the university system. The creation of the title "cand.merc." can in this respect be interpreted as an attempt to draw some clear, "and highly needed", symbolical boundaries between themselves and ordinary business employees, many of whom were in short supply of both higher degrees and maleness. In other words, the method used was to replicate the perceived male "elite". The alumni association wanted, so to speak, to give an illusion of professional importance and "high class", by connecting to what was looked upon as a well-regarded male profession. The question of whether the economists actually were part of the Norwegian elite at this early stage is thus secondary. In retrospect, one might also question the fruitfulness of this strategy. In terms of labor-market orientation, the economists, in fact, differed largely from the business graduates.

Norwegian bureaucracy and public administration was the most common career track of economists in the early postwar period. Almost none of the economists studying under Frisch headed for private business after graduation.²⁸¹ The Ministry of Finance and nearby public institutions like the Bank of Norway, the Central Bureau of Statistics and other state-controlled councils and inspection boards, were all common working places for graduates of political economy at the UiO. Seen in comparison with the graduates of NHH, the "university-made" economists had therefore a rather different available labor market. While the university-trained economists headed towards public administration, a large majority of the business graduates went for private business. NBF's effort to connect with the economic profession hence brought few professional advantages to the graduates. To be honest, the title "cand.merc." was never recognized by the business milieu, and none of the students seemed to believe that it would help entering higher business positions. Its academic quality, or reference, diverted attention away from firms, and in the late 1940s and early 1950s the issue was again hotly debated, now with clear references to the Nordic arena.

After five years of isolation and depression, there was a strong desire among Norwegian business graduates in 1945 to meet up with colleges from neighboring countries. During the fall of the same year, the NBF made contact with their Swedish

counterparts, and two years later the Nordic Federation of Economists was a fact, set up by business graduates from Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The Nordic network of business graduates, which later changed name into the Nordic Federation of Civil Economists, seems to have had a major impact on NHH students' search for a professional identity. And again the Swedish business-school experience was particularly valuable, having a far longer – and “richer” – history than the Norwegian business school in Bergen.

The Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) created in 1909 had initially been supported and financed by the Wallenberg family, a financial dynasty in Sweden. When a second business school managed to open in 1923, in Gothenburg, the business graduates increased not only in numbers, but little by little also in terms of professional importance and recognition.²⁸² The creation of a “second” business school had evident symbolic advantages for graduates from Stockholm. Suddenly they were the “oldest” and the most honorable graduates in the field, from which they could move into new and more prestigious business positions. However, in 1943 a new – and far more collective – strategy became visible within the Swedish milieu of business economics: By defining the business graduates as the economic analogue to the civil engineers, the hope was to increase the professional value even more, particularly within the larger industrial firms. But unlike the men of the Parisian *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* (HEC), who wanted to copy the title “engineer”, the Swedish business graduates took on the prefix “civil”. And all of a sudden a new – but still recognizable – title was born; i.e. “civil economist” (*civilekonom*).²⁸³ With this choice, Lars Engwall writes, it was apparent that the Swedish business graduates wanted to achieve parity with the graduates from institutions of technology, who were traditionally designated “civil engineers” (*civilingenjör*).²⁸⁴ In the engineering case there was, however, a historical explanation for the prefix “civil”. Among the business graduates there were none, but the fact that there were no military economists to distinguish from, did not prevent the choice of the title.

²⁸¹ Bergh, Trond & Tore J. Hanish (1984).

²⁸² Engwall, Lars, Elving Gunnarsson & Eva Wallerstedt (1996): 198.

²⁸³ Engwall, Lars (1992): 99. The Danes took on the same title in 1960 (Jens Vibæk & Jan Kobber, 1980: 353).

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

On the contrary, it resulted from a wish to connect with the engineers, not to distinguish themselves from other types of economists.

When the Norwegian business graduates got acquainted with the title *civilekonom* through the Nordic network, many began voicing their interest in simply translating the Swedish label into Norwegian. It was, however, an open secret that NHH's director, Professor Wederwang, strongly opposed the new title.²⁸⁵ The change of the business graduates' official name from "cand.merc.-candidate" to *siviløkonom* ("civil economists"), passed by a qualified majority in 1953, and thus received no official consent from the school. Both the management and the academic staff at NHH defined the title as something beyond their interest and control. But after intense lobbying from the NSF, the governmental authorities agreed to protect the label, and in 1963, the title was subjected to the administration of NHH by law. From this moment on it was up to the school to grant the title, not the alumni association, which, practically speaking, meant that all Norwegians holding foreign business degrees had to ask NHH for permission to make use of the label "civil economist" when applying for work.²⁸⁶

Notwithstanding the taste of elitism, state-control and guardianship that these bureaucratic proceedings brought about, many foreign students took the advantage of applying for the title when returning home to Norway. The most obvious explanation for this law-abiding behavior is the symbolic value gained by the title civil economists in relation to the internal labor markets of private firms. From the moment the decision to replace the old title was taken, it is apparent that the business graduates not only wanted, but also succeeded, in achieving greater responsibility in many business firms, and thus also greater parity with graduates of civil engineering. The business graduates' entrance into management became to an ever-increasing extent visible throughout the 1960s and early-1970s, although it took some more years before business studies replaced civil engineering as the most common educational background of Norwegian top-managers.

The efforts to make NHH a school of management were, on the contrary, few – at least from within its faculty.

²⁸⁵ Fjell, Tore J. (1989): 171 in *Norske siviløkonomer gjennom 50 år*.

²⁸⁶ This monopoly lasted until 1985, when the government decided to grant similar rights to BI and the Bodø Regional College. Agder Regional College got similar rights in 1993, but in 2003 the labeling authority went back to the NSF as result of the ratification of the Bologna agreement.

'The American Model' – For (Male) Executives Only

As a receiver of the Marshall aid, a series of American missions were organized in Norway in the late-1940s and early-1950s to facilitate and control the country's economic recovery. Right from the start of the Technical Assistance Program in 1948, the Norwegian government had been very enthusiastic about using American methods to achieve higher productivity. Both the Labor-led government and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) were positive to the assistance, seeing it as an handy instrument for increased state control of the economy.²⁸⁷ A state-ruled rationalization movement was, however, far from the taste of the Americans. It was, in other words, not what they envisioned with their improved emphasis on Europe's productivity. In the words of the American Mutual Security Agency (MSA), Special Mission to Norway, the productivity drive had been "largely restricted to the MSA Productivity and Technical Assistance Program. As such it is handled in each Ministry as a subsidiary problem whereas it should be a central consideration".²⁸⁸

As we shall return to in the following chapter, this was not the case in France. There the productivity drive to a large extent was included in the national economic planning. In Norway this never occurred. In fact, Ragnar Frisch's macro-economic planning and investment programs developed for the Labor-led government, were rather reluctant to American interference. On the other hand, the Mission criticized the government for putting too much emphasis on price control and the limitation of dividends, which in line with the Americans' way of reasoning, threatened market competition and private initiatives.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gunnar Yttri (1998): 123 – 124.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.: 125, referring to report from W. W. Wiggins, Mutual Security Agency Norway, to E. Brofoss, Minister of Commerce: "Planning for Productivity. A Basic Mission Analysis", 03.09.1952.

²⁸⁹ The emphasis on price control was mainly due to the reconstruction of Norway after 1945. The Labor-led government continued, however, to emphasize the importance of regulation and control of prices and production longer than most other war-struck countries. The question caused in particular problems in 1952, when the Price and Rationalization Law Committee, established by the government in 1947, finally arrived with its recommendations. The majority of the committee, of whom many had close ties to the Labor Party and LO, envisioned a permanent Price Law and a permanent Rationalization Law. If accepted, these Laws would have given permanent power to the Norwegian Parliament to decide where Norwegian industry should be located, what and how much they could produce, and when they should stop producing. The Bill was never passed and the employers' associations drew a sign of relief. Instead the NPI was created, without the participation of the government.

The government's special claims on the American assistance had, moreover, made company managements skeptical about the question of productivity. Fearing socialist control over anything and everything, the management appeared to refuse to cooperate with the government on these problems, claiming that the Economic Cooperation Administration (EAC) had failed to establish a productivity institute of the kind already existing in most OEEC countries, France included.²⁹⁰ The unwillingness among the managers was destructive, the MSA Mission stated. It had an unfavorable effect on the aim of improving Norwegian productivity. Subsequently, the political participation had to stop, "...if a productivity drive is to be made, management must assume major responsibility and initiative".²⁹¹

The outcome of the recommendations given by the Mission in 1952 was that the government finally decided to abstain from being represented in a future productivity committee. Consequently, the Norwegian Productivity Institute (NPI) was established the following year, with the support of LO, the State and several business associations. Its overall aim was to encourage productivity growth in industrial production and distribution, through the diffusion of American managerial know-how and productivity tools. In this way, the NPI served as an intermediary body for the EAP, coordinating the productivity drive in Europe. Management training was a central topic within the EAPs' field of action. The agency was, as we shall come back to in the following chapter, vital for the making of INSEAD in France, the first American-styled business school in Europe. For the time being we shall, however, look at the effect of NPI on Norwegian management education.

Even though there were no institutions of management education or training when the MSA Mission arrived in Norway, the Americans were impressed by the position already gained by NHH and the Norwegian Technical University (NTH) in the education of top managers. Due to the small-structured Norwegian industry, many of the graduates of engineering and business were employed as top-managers a few years after graduation. This made both institutions of higher learning into important providers of top-managers,

²⁹⁰ The French productivity committee was established in 1950. For more on this see chapter 8.

²⁹¹ Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gunnar Yttri (1998): 126, referring to report from W. W. Wiggins, Mutual Security Agency Norway, to E. Brofoss, Minister of Commerce: "Planning for Productivity. A Basic Mission Analysis", 03.09.1952.

despite the fact that neither of them actually taught management or provided explicit management training. The schedule at NHH was, as was seen earlier, dominated by the teaching of economics and German inspired business economics, not the disciplines of management, which consisted of psychology, sociology and organizational studies. Did the productivity drive change this?

According to Rolv Petter Amdam, the “productivity programme contributed to substantial changes at the NTH and the NHH”.²⁹² Concerning the latter, the changes related first of all to a broadening of content and competence related to courses in organizational theories and human relations, and financial support for a one-year assistant professorship in administration and retail distribution in 1954.²⁹³ Teachers and professors at NHH benefited additionally from the possibility of “going on mission” to the US. By the time the NPI’s work came to an end, in the early 1960s, 32 Norwegians had taken advantage of the possibility of studying American management methods in the US, of which more than ten were students at NHH. Finally, the NPI encouraged the development of an executive program out of the Administrative Research Foundation (AFF) – a newly established institution attached to the school, though autonomously directed. AFF’s management program, later known as the “Solstrand program”, managed to gain high reputation among Norwegian business managers. According to Amdam “[m]ost of the American professors who visited Bergen lectured on this programme, rather than at the NHH”.²⁹⁴

Amdam is probably right when he argues for the importance of the productivity drive in the development of Norwegian competence in management and management training in the postwar period. But, the question is still to what extent this reorientation profited students at NHH. According to the findings of Amdam, it would nearly appear as if one needed to be a successful top-manager to get hold of the American “miraculous cure”. What about those civil economists who never reached this far, and what about the approximately 40 female candidates who graduated from NHH before 1970?

²⁹² Amdam, Rolv Petter (1999): 40.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

Stability seems to be the key word when comparing the syllabi used at NHH in the period 1937 – 1975. In fact, the weekly hours taught in business administrative subjects increased only moderately. For instance, the number of lessons in the organizational sciences rose by only one hour per week, from 2 to 3 between 1937 and 1960. The emphasis on work psychology and human resource management was considerable stronger, but the 6 hours a week added to the course plan in 1960 by no means challenged the position of economics and business economics as the school's core disciplines. The American notion of professional management, and thus something that could be taught and learned in a specific establishment, had little support within the faculty, while the few professors who advocated it, like Rolf Waaler, did so mostly within institutions like AFF, and thus outside the school.²⁹⁵

Waaler, who was appointed professor at the Department of work psychology and human resource management in 1950, was among the very few to support the idea of courses in general management at NHH.²⁹⁶ After being appointed professor, he publicized issues like management training extensively in articles and public lectures, and helped to sort out the difference between, for instance, management education and management development. "Management development is the more compelling concept", he wrote to NSF's members in 1965.²⁹⁷ In contrast to management education, which aims at developing knowledge and skills in areas concerning management in general, management development "encompasses every venture which has as its purpose an increase in the quality of management".²⁹⁸

The American paradigm of general management gained, nonetheless, little legitimacy within academic circles, and at NHH, the professors were increasingly looking upon themselves as academics, not management instructors or consultants. Furthermore, the state took little interest in the issue until a public commission for management

²⁹⁵ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 266.

²⁹⁶ BBI, *Bedriftsøkonomen* (1939 – 1980). This statement is based on the number of articles on management training and the 'American Model' written by teachers and professors at NHH. Almost every article published on the issue in the 1960s was made by Waaler. See for instance: "Inntrykk fra USA. Utdannelse på det økonomisk-administrative området" (7/1962: 272 – 277), "Lederutvikling" (1/1965: 4 – 7).

²⁹⁷ Ibid.: (1965): 4.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. (1965): 4 Citation in original "...omfatter alle tiltak som har til hensikt å øke kvaliteten av lederskapet."

training was established in 1968; i.e. The Norwegian Council of Management Education. However, the council never gained any strong position within the Norwegian public sphere, and lacked legitimacy both vis-à-vis business and academia. Evidently, this gave space for private initiatives and institutions of management education, as much as it provided fertile soil for management “gurus”, such as George Kenning, at the level of firms.

Kenning visited Norway for the first time in 1955, on request from the NPI to advise on training courses for Norwegian managers.²⁹⁹ But the American consultant was soon to develop his own coaching program, targeting top-managers within the country’s largest firms. By stressing the importance of strong management for the mobilization of workers, and thus also productivity, he managed to establish his own group of “disciples” of young and ambitious business graduates and leaders, later known as the “Kenning School”. Kenning visited Norway annually over a period of twenty years, and many of his male “trainees” were later to climb very high in the Norwegian managerial hierarchy. In fact, some also fell down again, after reaching the top, due to over-expansion and unsuccessful mergers.³⁰⁰ These events, which took place in the late-1980s, made many critical of Kennings’ emphasis on general management. The American notion that a good manager is able to manage all kind of companies was said to be false, and the attempt to make management into a profession was proclaimed a dead end.

The story of George Kenning and his successful group of men is, however, a good illustration of how the American model became an exclusive reference-point in Norway. As a result of NHH’s weak emphasis on general management, the paradigm was left to – as well as reserved for – those already included in the “good society” of top-managers as well as the young hopefuls. Consequently, being a student of business economics at NHH was not enough to get acquainted with the American model. In Norway, women with a higher-business degree were, therefore, not automatically exposed to American managerial “know-how”, as in France. Inclusion in the management-training programs

²⁹⁹ Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gunnar Yttri (1998): 134.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. For more on Kenning see Ragnvald Kalleberg (1995) and Rolv Petter Amdam & Ragnhild Kvålshaugen (2000).

depended instead on internal promotion and “backing”, and few of the female “civil economists” got this opportunity.

Anne-Johanne Loe, the first female graduate from NHH, for sure did not take part in the management training courses established in the 1950s and 1960s, neither those run by AFF, Kenning or the NSF. Following an interview in *Bedriftsøkonomen* in 1959, she worked in a publishing house until she left to raise a family, but by the time her children started school she felt the need to make use of her degree again and was “appointed as office manager in the Norwegian Housewives’ League”.³⁰¹ Among the approximately 40 women graduating from NHH before 1970, the most common profession by far was that of high school teacher.³⁰² Only four of the female civil economists who graduated before this time worked in private business. According to a leaflet on NHH’s candidates handed out in 1986, one of the four filled the position of manager in a Stockholm company, another as a bank executive in Oslo. The two others were middle managers in an insurance and consultancy firm, respectively.³⁰³ It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the editor of NSF’s monthly was hardly thinking of the *female* civil economists when writing the following in 1962:

Gods are changing with time. Who will be the men of the future? There will always be peaks and unique achievements being made in this way. Nevertheless, there is much to be said for a reemphasis on managers of industry and business. The manager’s task is getting larger and his work more difficult. This situation requires new evaluations of his function within the firm as well as his role in society at large.³⁰⁴

Concluding Remarks

As a result of the inter-war crisis, the creation of the Norwegian business school in Bergen was delayed by almost two decades. The delay had major consequences for the

³⁰¹ BBI, *Bedriftsøkonomen* (27/1959): 102 Citation in original: “hun er nu ansatt som kontorsjef i Norges Husmorforbund.”

³⁰² BNHH, *Kandidater fra NHH 1936 – 1986* (1986, Bergen). Arnljot Strømme Svendsen also confirmed this during an interview 08.01.2001, Bergen.

³⁰³ Ibid.: A handful candidates had had careers within the civil services.

³⁰⁴ BBI, *Bedriftsøkonomen* (10/1962): 427 Citation in original: “Tidens guder skifter. Hvem blir morgendagens menn? Det vil alltid være topper og topprestasjoner som honorerer på denne måte. Det er meget som taler for at lederne i næringslivet og bedriftene nå kommer i søkelyset igjen. Lederes oppgave

shaping of NHH's content. Whereas the first outline, made in 1917, envisioned a school of commerce, by the time NHH opened, the syllabus gave priority to business economics along with macroeconomics. This provided NHH with legitimacy both in relation to other institutions of higher learning, like the University of Oslo and its Department of Economics, and the dominant political milieu, although it definitely distanced the school from the field of business practice, i.e. the firm. The academic or scientific foundation of NHH diminished, furthermore, the relevance of gender as source of power and worth within the field of higher business education. Unlike its institutional forerunner, the Oslo Commercial Gymnasium, the administration at NHH never employed the power of gender in order to get institutional legitimacy for a project lacking in initial capital in relation to a variety of fields and areas. There were, for instance, no admission policies barring women from NHH of the kind that existed in Paris.

Its academic underpinning could, on the other hand, not prevent other actors from relying on gender. Among these was the business-high school of Oslo. The secretarial school created by the OHG during the German occupation, was explicitly gendered female in its replacement of its old female evening classes. Apart from allowing only girls to enter, it gave priority to the so-called "female" office skills like typewriting, stenography and foreign languages. This reproduced, as much as reinforced, the two-sex model which existing beforehand, and made the Norwegian experience of higher business education in the period 1930s – 1960s surprisingly similar to the Parisian experience in the same period. A crucial difference between the Norwegian and the French two-sex system was still its implicitness – or explicitness. Whereas the Parisian business schools operated within an explicit two-sex model, the Norwegian system kept operating with double standards. On the surface it looked as if gender had no significance, but as soon as one went beyond the academic shells of NHH or those of the lower levels, the field is revealed as being as gendered or sexist as the Parisian. The "female sphere" was in particular restricted, and perhaps more limited than in the French capital, even though Norwegian authorities had made clear in 1946 that institutions requiring the *Ex-A* had to accept male applicants. But, as this chapter has illustrated, the impact or power of this

er blitt større og hans rolle vanskeligere. Denne utviklingen vil fortsette, og vil kreve en ny vurdering av lederens funksjon i bedriften og hans plass i samfunnsbildet."

statement on men and women's educational practices was low. Given the implicitness of the two-sex model, weak female recruitment to the upper level of higher business education never was an issue. Rather, it was taken for granted and was thus invisible to the naked eye.

The secretarial schools also continued as before, even if the official label of the program changed to something more gender neutral. In terms of teaching this meant operating according to the so-called "minimum requirements within business economics". Both political economy and advanced business economics were omitted from the syllabi of the secretarial schools, while the teaching of practical, or machine-like, business skills just increased. This limited the female business graduates' access to the new authority of the postwar period, i.e. economics, while the students attending NHH – of which a large majority were men – had nothing but economics.

The difference between the "male" and the "female" version of higher business education was never as large in postwar France as in Norway. Due to the generalist approach celebrated by French engineering schools, HECJF managed to carve a place or position for itself within the established elite school system for men by, for one thing, taking on the selective admission policy practiced by the *grandes écoles*. This reduced or weakened the importance of gender in relation to the academic field of business studies in France, whereas its importance was maintained or even reinforced in Norway within the same period, justified through a discourse of utility, efficiency and science. Simply the fact that Norway had no elite school in business administration for women, and only vocationally-oriented secretarial schools, made it difficult for female business graduates to climb the corporate ladder. To qualify for higher managerial positions with a degree in typewriting and stenography was, needless to say, impossible.

The Norwegian ideal of specialist knowledge as the basis for professional authority reduced, moreover, the effect of American-imported knowledge. Institutions of higher learning, like NHH, had difficulties in accepting the notion of management as a profession in itself and as an independent academic discipline. It seems in fact as if the conditions for the American business school model were worse in Bergen than in Paris. NHH never came close to the American business school model in the postwar period,

even if the school was an ever more important institution for the recruitment of business managers.

The graduates of NHH declared from early on an ambition to climb the managerial hierarchy as managers, but as in France, they formally belonged to the fast-growing class of salaried business employees, of which many had no higher degrees at all. Such a situation, combined with the fact that NHH was a relatively new school, made the graduates dependent on various types of strategies, of which labeling was the most important. The alumni association made several efforts to connect with other and more prestigious male professions before getting acquainted with the "Swedish way", and of simply copying the prefix "civil" used by the engineers. Translated into Norwegian, the label "civil economist" managed to achieve considerable symbolic power, which in combination with a selective entrance policy, made the male business graduates of NHH a popular and increasingly exclusive group of men within Norwegian business.

Le management c'est ce complexe bagage de connaissances, d'aptitudes, et d'attitudes, nécessaires à l'exercice de la fonction. Il est l'objet d'une formation spécifique et d'un perfectionnement permanent.

J.Y.Eichenberger / Ingénieur civil des Mines³⁰⁵

CHAPTER EIGHT

France: The Equalizing Influence of the 'American Model'

In the 1960s, French business schools made an unambiguous move towards the "American model" of business education.³⁰⁶ Management or *gestion*, which became the French equivalent, replaced the loosely integrated commercial "sciences", and internships in French and foreign companies were made compulsory.³⁰⁷ Even the business schools' official label was reformulated. From being categorized as schools of commerce, which in everyday speech was simply "Sup de Co", HEC commenced referring to itself as an institution of management education and training. And by 1970, the title *école supérieure de gestion* or *grande école de gestion* stood in place of the old commercial one.³⁰⁸ Symbolically speaking, this made the business schools into providers of management

³⁰⁵ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 117, 1971): 12.

³⁰⁶ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 115, 1970): "Le dynamisme de nos Grandes Ecoles de Gestion": 11 – 73. The American business school is in no way a coherent phenomenon. As in Europe, individual and institutional differences have come to characterize the American development of higher business education. There was, nonetheless, a growing tendency in France to talk about the American business schools as one, and thus single, from the 1920s onwards. The term the "American model" of business education, therefore, refers to this discourse and not the American business-school experience as such, or the American model of industrial production, emphasizing large-scale manufacturing under the control of professionally trained managers. For the two latter see Charter A. Daniel (1998), Niel Fligstein (1990), and Marie-Laure Djelic (1998).

³⁰⁷ *Gestion* is derived from *gérer*, which means "to manage or run" (The Concise Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary (1995), eds. Marie-Hélène Corréard & Valerie Grundby, Oxford University Press: 280).

³⁰⁸ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5): Direction de l'enseignement, *Rapport d'orientation de l'enseignement* (avril 1979).

knowledge as well as business managers, a novel combination within the French field of higher education.³⁰⁹

Thus, a substantial part of the research on this period has addressed precisely the American influence on the French institutions of business education.³¹⁰ In particular, the reforms *à l'Américaine* in the 1960s have been thoroughly studied, and also the following “academization”. Another well-documented aspect of this restructuring was the French state’s mounting concern for business education. The governmental interest in this issue was in many ways a continuation of the productivity discourse, transmitted by French technocrats and businessmen in the 1950s, who argued that the economic performance of Europe and France suffered from their lack of competence in management and organization. A way out of this “managerial gap”, which was most clearly evident in the cases of civil servants, politicians and business consultants, was – for one thing – to modernize and improve the country’s capacity in management training. In 1968, this insight brought about a national foundation of management education (FNEGE), launched in cooperation with the private business community, and a state-run university (Paris IX Dauphine) devoted to management studies.³¹¹ But once again, we know less about how this shift interacted with – and affected – the two-sex model. The current chapter hence focuses on the importance of the American model in restructuring the Parisian field of higher business education, in general, and its gendered consequences, in particular. It starts out with the educational reforms inspired by the American business

³⁰⁹ In France, where family-run firms were for long the dominant industrial structure, management was thought of something as a “gift” handed over from father to son, and thus a personal and inherited quality, not a profession or science. This changed, however, in the postwar period – due for one thing to the *cadres* movement, but also the productivity drive of the 1950s, which argued for structural and professional changes of the kind undertaken by American firms in the early-twentieth century.

³¹⁰ Meuleu, Marc (1981); (1992), Locke, Robert (1989), Gemelli, Giuliana (1997), Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle (1996); & Fabienne Pavis (2001), Gourvish, Terry R. & Nick Tiratsoo (1998), Kipping, Mathias & Jean-Pierre Nioche (1997), Lazuech, Gilles (1999), Meniszez, Yvette (1979).

³¹¹ *Hommes et commerce* (No. 134, 1973): 35. FNEGE stands for the Fondation nationale pour l’enseignement de la gestion des entreprises, and was founded by the Ministry of Industry (initiated by Michel Debré, Minister of Economy and Finance) with the joint participation of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce and the Centre du Patronat Français (CNPF). FNEGE was initially made to “former des professeurs de gestion dont la France manque”. In addition to supporting the creation of Paris-Dauphine, FNEGE provided scholarships to French students who wanted to go abroad in order to obtain a higher degree in management and business administration. From just 1968 until the mid-1970s, 340 French students were sent off to the US and other countries on FNEGE scholarships, with the aim of improving their academic capital in the new field. About 40 of these took up positions in French business schools

school model, and ends with the aftermath of the student revolts in May 68, when the Ministry of Education made the recommendation to “d’ouvrir à tous les candidats, garçons et filles, aux concours des écoles d’enseignement supérieur commercial”.³¹²

The ‘New Paradigm’– Management

Luc Boltanski argues that the French *cadres* were a group that strategically used ideas imported from American to increase its socio-professional value in the postwar period – as “managers”.³¹³ Apart from through popular weeklies like *L’Express*, this depended on intermediate institutions and business communities like the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP), importing and diffusing the American “managerial gospel” to France after the war. As discussed in Chapter 6, the CCIP had, from early on, started to look across the Atlantic for input on how to run business firms as much as business schools. Though during the 1950s, this use of the American notion of professional management got a new and strong impetus; the support of the French technocrats.³¹⁴ As a receiver of Marshall aid, France had already been included in the European productivity drive, initiated by European authorities and business networks in cooperation with, and strongly fuelled by, American interests and pressure.³¹⁵ Not only did French delegates travel to the US to get hold of American methods and “best practices”, as in the 1920s,³¹⁶ but

afterwards, mostly HEC, ESSEC and INSEAD, as professors and teachers. See Merie-Emmanuelle Chessel & Fabienne Pavis (2001), Junko Tagaki & Laurence de Carlo (2003), Olivier Thorat (1994).

³¹² *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (29.8.1968), referred to in *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 227, 1969): 15.

³¹³ Boltanski, Luc (1982): 184 – 226.

³¹⁴ This thrust came above all from a small, but powerful network of men, originating within the public sphere that worked particularly within the civil service and high administration. Many of them were connected to École Nationale d’Administration (ENA), either as graduates or teachers, while others were active in the French planning board, wherein Jean Monnet played a vital role. See Marie-Laure Djelic (1998): 94 – 95, 101 – 103.

³¹⁵ French authorities refused a joint productivity council based on official Franco-American collaboration. According to Marie-Laure Djelic, the Americans were employing a strategy of indirect cooperation in France, while the American assistance was largely more direct in Britain. When a French national committee on productivity (Comité National de la Productivité – CNP) was established in 1950, it included – after strong American pressure – civil servants and members of the French planning board in addition to members of business and labor communities. Only the communist trade union was not represented. See Marie-Laure Djelic (1998): 147 – 148.

³¹⁶ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (1): Enseignement commerciales, généralités, politique de la Chambre de commerce: correspondance, rapports, notes, documentation 1902 – 1956. The CCIP went on “mission sur la productivité aux USA” in 1952.

Americans also came to visit France too, with the aim of diagnosing and improving French productivity.³¹⁷

The second French plan, which ran from 1954 to 1957, had a relatively independent or national point of departure, however. The American assistance had come to an end, and it was now up to the French to prove that production could be increased by 20% by the end of the period. Among the actions introduced was a reorganization of businesses that aimed to promote larger-scale production, as there was a belief that size and efficiency were two sides of the same coin. Another spur was the diffusion of modern methods and models of management training and education.³¹⁸ This was, nonetheless, entirely in line with both the policies of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), created in the US in order to control the Marshall Aid in Europe, and the European Productivity Agency (EPA), established in 1953 – also an American initiative.³¹⁹ Both organizations saw the development of business education which corresponded to American principles as a pressing responsibility, and this obviously gained a hearing within the French planning committee.

The report issued by the French General Commissariat of Productivity in 1957 reproduced, in many ways, the ideas of the American “missionaries”. The key argument was that the relationship between education and business function was weak in France. It stated, for example, that many of those undertaking work in French firms had no formal education in management and some even worked “même sans formation aucune”.³²⁰ Thus, strengthening as well as diversifying the country’s capacity in professional education was considered to be crucial. Still, the magnitude of this early state action should not be overstated. With the exception of the IAE (Instituts d’Administration des Entreprises) programs, opening in 1955/56, the authorities took little direct action until

³¹⁷ Kipping, Matthias & Jean-Pierre Niche (1997): 65.

³¹⁸ Djelic, Marie-Laure (1998): 142, Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle & Fabienne Pavis (2001): 30. Other incentives or actions concerned access to cheap credit allocation, tax exemptions, access to public markets and American technical assistance – knowing it would facilitate mergers, internal restructuring or rationalization of modes of production.

³¹⁹ The Commissariat Général à la Productivité previewed in the report “Les besoins en cadres de l’économie française” (1957) by Pierre Bize, held that the need for personnel with knowledge in administration and sale was particularly high in the French economy (*Hommes et Commerce*, No. 97, 1967: 64).

³²⁰ *Ibid.*: 66.

the mid-60s, when a law defining professional education a national responsibility was prepared. The decree, passing the National Assembly in December 1966, stated that;

La Formation professionnelle constitue une obligation nationale; elle a pour objet de favoriser l'accès des jeunes et des adultes aux différents niveaux de la culture et de la qualification professionnelle et d'assurer le progrès économique et social.³²¹

In the meanwhile, though, semi-public bodies like the CCIP and private foundations formed the backbone of the modernization of French business education.³²²

The opening of Europe's first MBA program in 1959, in the Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires (INSEAD) which was situated in Fontainebleau south of Paris, depended heavily on American support and legitimacy vis-à-vis the EPA and the Parisian Chamber of Commerce.³²³ The Italian business historian Giuliana Gemelli has provided convincing arguments about the importance of the Ford Foundation during this period, which acted as a kind of mediator or translator of American patterns to Europe.³²⁴ Apart from financial assistance, this foundation made INSEAD visible in the arenas of international business operations and research, two fields that – according to the American business-school formula – were closely interconnected.³²⁵ It appears that the

³²¹ Loi no. 66-892 du 3 décembre 1966, *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, 4 décembre 1966, 10611.

³²² ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): Although the decree of 1898 defined the French Chambers of commerce to be public institutions, there was no stable relationship between the public authorities and the business schools owned by the CCIP. For instance, CCIP's business schools were defined as private institutions from 1919, and thus "soumis au régime des établissements techniques privés" (Letter from the Ministry of Education, Section for technical education, dated 7.11.1959: 2). The CCIP had for this reason to ask for special recognition for each institution. This happened first in relation to some of its most prominent establishments, like the HEC (1923), HECJF (1925), the CPA (1932). In general, this meant that the Minister of Education officially recognized each school, and that the diploma issued was delivered with state visas. But in 1960, the issue of state recognition was brought forward once again, mostly because of the growing state interest in the field. As a response to this, the CCIP asked the Ministry of Education to inform them about the juridical regimes under which their schools belonged. In the same letter, dated the 22.01.1960, the Chamber also asked for a collective recognition of its business schools, replacing the old regime of individual acceptance. This request was not approved, though, indicating that every single school continued being affirmed individually, and not according to whom its formal owner was. See also *Entreprise et Histoire* (1997) No. 14 – 15, and *Actes du Colloque. Les écoles de gestion et la formation des élites*. (1997) ed. by Monique de Saint Martin & Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu.

³²³ INSEAD = Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires. This post-graduate school, the first of its kind in Europe, was the result of cooperation between the Ford Foundation, the European Productivity Agency and the CCIP. See Giuliana Gemelli 1998): 208 – 217, and Jean-Louis Barsoux (2000).

³²⁴ Gemelli, Giuliana (1997); (1998).

³²⁵ Ibid. (1998): 216.

underlying idea of this model was that research in management and business administration had to be systematically fostered, “leading to the institutionalization of management as a ‘science’”.³²⁶

INSEAD, being a European school, involved at first few French graduates. As always, the reputation and status of a business school depended largely on its alumni’s capacity to enter as many sectors and functions as quickly as possible. And France was in no way an exception.³²⁷ On the contrary, the history of the French business schools told so far is an excellent example of the long time that was needed to build up a new brand name, when the main activity has certain moral problems attached to it – such as moneymaking and human “bossing”.

Moreover, the institutional distinction between undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level that the MBA was embedded in was unknown to most Europeans at this time. Instead, every country had its distinct education system, and the French was one of the most complicated ones. Not simply because it distinguished between lower and higher university studies in a different way to the Americans, but also because the crucial dividing line was between the faculties and the elite schools, which created very tough competition between educational institutions and diplomas. An educational tradition and structure of this kind opposed the logic of undergraduate/graduate/post-graduate in every respect, as it was not the year, discipline or even work experience that served as the key principle of coordination, but the single institution, and its hereditary and/or earned symbolic capital and position in the national educational hierarchy. This made it hard for an incipient institution like INSEAD to recruit French students in the early days, although it had a European name attached to it. Besides, HEC was modernizing too.

HEC in line with American Standards

After several productivity study trips to the US in the early 1950s, the CCIP decided in 1956 to reorganize HEC’s educational program in line with the American business-school model. This brought about the establishment of a General Inspection of Education, and in 1957 a report was presented for the Chamber’s General Assembly, envisioning a

³²⁶ Djelic, Marie-Laure (1998): 214.

³²⁷ Ibid.

total reorientation of the school's syllabus.³²⁸ The old curriculum and pedagogy had to change, the report stated, whereas the school itself was going to be moved out of Paris, and rebuild on an American-inspired countryside campus.³²⁹ In other words, a profound renewal was needed if HEC was to serve the modern economy by selecting and educating future *cadres* and *directeurs d'entreprise*. The renewal was divided into three basic actions of change. The first action initiated concerned the content. The teaching had to be much more functional than before in order to strengthen the relationship between the school and the business enterprise. The basic problems faced by modern enterprises were to inform the content of HEC, not some pre-given standard of *culture générale* and ancient ideas about the "cultivated man". From now on, HEC was thought of forming

non plus seulement des hommes de culture et de connaissance, mais surtout des hommes d'action, capables d'intervenir efficacement et aussi rapidement que possible après leur sortie de l'Ecole dans les diverses fonctions de l'entreprise, et prêts à prendre avec succès leurs responsabilités au niveau de la Direction Générale dès que le moment en serait venu pour eux.³³⁰

One visible consequence of this curricular reorientation was the replacement of subjects like law, accounting and foreign languages with more functional and modern disciplines such as management control, financial management, marketing, work organization and human relations. The three former disciplines, for long making up the core of HEC's syllabus, were still compulsory, though. The "new paradigm" removed them, however, from the curricular center to the periphery, defined as "the cultural environment of the firm", while the new disciplines formed the core of what was called "The learning of management".³³¹ In line with the CCIP, an emphasis of this kind represented a move from business hierarchy to function, from the past to the future.

³²⁸ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4) Jean Martin: *Rapport sur la révision de l'enseignement d'HEC* (presented the 24.10.1957).

³²⁹ Meuleau, Marc (1997): 66.

³³⁰ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 114, 1970): 20.

³³¹ *Ibid*: 26 – 28.

A la notion traditionnelle de comptabilité, technique d'enregistrement tournée vers le passé, l'Ecole substituait le *contrôle de gestion* qui oriente l'outil comptable vers l'avenir et en fait un moyen privilégié de réflexion et de décision.³³²

While the traditional notion of accounting was directed towards the past, the management paradigm made use of this same work tools in order to approach "the future", the argument went.³³³ An old – and highly practical – business-school discipline like bookkeeping was, in this way, given a new meaning. From this point on, it was to be introduced into the field of decision-making and strategy, thanks to the import of the "American model".³³⁴ To fix the school's program once and forever would be still impossible, the Parisian Chamber of Commerce stated, as a result of "l'évolution rapide du monde des affaires et l'affinement progressif des techniques de gestion". New courses had for this reason to be made along the way, and old ones erased when they went out of date.³³⁵ What was clear, however, was that its curricular focus was to be rooted in the business firm's various functions, context and tools of management – preparing the students for decision-making, leadership, and thus positions "au niveau de la Direction Générale".

The second set of plans to modernize HEC's program had to do with pedagogy and intellectual resources. Apart from giving the students an education as concrete, practical and applied as possible, the Chamber wanted to make sure that the instruction emphasized activity instead of passive study. One procedure facilitating this move towards "learning by doing", apart from compulsory internships, was classroom teaching and seminar-discussions as a supplement to lecturing.³³⁶ The case-study method, wherein

³³² *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 114, 1970): 20.

³³³ *Ibid.*: 20

³³⁴ Robert Locke was the first to introduce the term the "new paradigm", to describe the introduction of the "American model" in Continental business schools after World War Two. See Robert Locke (1989).

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ HEC operated with three different types of internships, or *stages* as it is called in French, from the 1960s onwards. In the first year, the students had something called "stage ouvrier" (worker's internship), which lasted one month and took place during the summer vacation. The second was "stage à l'étranger" (internship abroad), lasting for 8 weeks abroad. During these weeks the candidates were supposed to work in a foreign company, but study-trips was also accepted, if a report was made after arrival. The third internship took place between February and March the third year. This time the students carried out a research project linked to the enterprise they worked for with the aim of developing it into a final thesis, written under the supervision of a professor.

students had to analyze and “solve” real business problems, was re-instated. As we remember, this American-imported method was tried at HEC as early as 1928, but as it received little support from its part-time faculty, it fell out of use. In 1966, American style case-study teaching was reinstalled, and unlike last time it managed to survive the critique. This was mainly because the method was better integrated into the course work than before, but also because a new and more permanent corps of professors in business administration and related disciplines had substituted the old mix of university professors/higher-school teachers and businessmen.

By 1970, HEC had a permanent faculty consisting of approximately 120 members altogether. Many of the new professors also had American MBAs or doctoral degrees and not higher university diplomas from France. Management was a young science, and in France was just about to be accepted as a university discipline.³³⁷ Of course, the institutional groundwork for this was laid out with the opening of Dauphine in 1968, but there was nothing like a French doctoral program in management until 1974. This made HEC the first French institution of higher business learning to introduce academic criteria. The right to provide doctoral degrees in management was, however, not granted HEC until 1985.³³⁸ Its staff was, nonetheless, increasingly “bilingual” in the 1960s, as they combined teaching with applied management research and business consultancy, just as the American model called for. Over time, this increased the school’s legitimacy on the national scene as well as internationally. In most countries, a full-time faculty committed to scientific research was a precondition for being considered an institution of higher learning. Only France seemed to continue operating within a unconnected system – wherein research and teaching were organized in different institutions, and thus tended to operate separately.

The research tradition within many French universities and *grandes écoles* is still weak compared to neighboring countries like Germany, but also compared to Norway.³³⁹ As we saw in the foregoing chapter, NHH chose the academic road and was given the

³³⁷ Tagaki, Junko & Laurence de Carlo (2003): 49, Figure 2.2, 50, Figure 2.3.

³³⁸ In the meanwhile, doctoral degrees were granted in cooperation with the university, a characteristic which was common for most of the *grandes écoles* until quite recently. HEC is still the only institution among the French business schools having the right to grant their own doctoral degrees. ESSEC issues, for example, their doctoral degrees in cooperation with the University of Aix-en-Provence.

authority to grant doctoral degrees in business economics already from the late-1950s. When the French field of business education later managed to increase its academic reputation, it was mainly because of the importation of the American model, supported by the state authorities.

The third, and last action of these changes, initiated in the late 1950s and inaugurated in 1964 under the presence of general de Gaulle, concerned HEC's relocation out from Paris. And like the previous adjustments, this was also in complete conformity with the American model. The campus-model that the CCIP copied was in many ways an American invention, and its application to HEC had major consequences for the symbolic representation of the school. Its old and dignified location in the Haussmannian 17th *arrondissement* was left for a hyper-modern complex consisting of several smaller buildings near the village Jouy-en-Josas. This town, situated a two-hour train ride southwest of Paris, had once been an important industrial area known for its cotton printing, but there was little left of this entrepreneurial spirit in the 1960s.³⁴⁰ Literally locked off from civilization, due to dreadful infrastructure and the difficulties of communicating back-and-forth to Paris, life at Jouy-en-Josas had little to offer besides fresh air and the company of each other.

HEC's removal from Paris symbolized a final break with its nineteenth-century legacy, a legacy that was both gendered male and classed bourgeois. Not to say that this was completely abandoned with the adoption of the American model. It continued to accept only men, and the social background of the students was, as we have seen already, still very (upper) middle class. However, the Parisian – meaning bourgeois – atmosphere diminished with the move to the new campus, and the masculine culture was perceived as becoming considerably less snobby.³⁴¹ That this affected or changed the school's representation of gender seems, therefore, evident. Along with the more general transformations of youth culture in the early 1960s, which manifesting the "young" as a social group different from others, campus life also exposed the young men to new images and identities. At Jouy-en-Josas, there was no need – or wish – to dress up every

³³⁹ Larsen, Eirinn (2003b).

³⁴⁰ Milward, Alan & S. B. Saul (1979): 273.

³⁴¹ Interview with Professor Georges Trepo, Jouy-en-Josas, 5.11.1999.

day. Trousers and coat or simply a V-neck sweater and a sport jacket replaced the black suit. Sport also became an ever-more important activity among the boys. While cultural Paris was more than an hour's car ride away, there was no need to leave the campus to play sport. Surrounded by forest, fields and several sports' grounds for soccer, rugby or even horse riding, the students could literary stay on campus all week without having anything to with the "outside" world. More cultural groups, like a cinema club and a theater company, were also created at campus. Some cultural events even made Parisian girls take the long ride to Jouy-en-Josas, in order to meet "suitable" partners.³⁴²

But the American model not only affected the images and cultural representation of higher business education, but the two-sex structure, in which the field was embedded, also changed considerably from the mid 1960s onwards.

Management – Also for Women?

Due to their position within the elite school system, candidates of the École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF) had ready access to the "American model" in the late-1950s and 1960s. Issues related to management were, for instance, regularly debated within the school's alumni association, and the school itself adopted – like HEC – a more functional approach to the business enterprise. Internships were made compulsory already in 1950, but the arrangement was gradually strengthened and improved in the 1960s.³⁴³ From 1964, the 3rd-year specialization included all the new disciplines like management control, marketing, administration and finance etc., and by the end of the decade the school had reorganized its syllabus completely. The old specialization in secretarial work was erased, and what was left was a reformed school, distinguishing between the learning of management, management techniques and business environment, to which some of its own inventions like the "Methods of work and techniques of expressions" were added. This made the male and female business school models increasingly similar again, although HECJF had made use of many of the pedagogical innovations for years already, such as the case-study method and class-room activity and discussions.

³⁴² Interview with Professor Jacqueline Laufer, Paris 13ème, 24.02.2001.

The reforms and changes undertaken in the 1960s seem, therefore, to have been less drastic and far-reaching for HECJF than HEC. All the same, the female business graduates kept a close eye on the “Americanization” of French and European business education. For instance, the opening of INSEAD did not pass without notice. Shortly after the inauguration of INSEAD in Fontainebleau, the *HECJF Bulletin* informed its readers about the happening, under the headline; “An European Institute of Business Administration has been made”.³⁴⁴ Its basic ambition, to “former les futures cadres dirigeants de entreprise d’Europe”, was said to be an interesting project, but the school was unfortunately not open to women. This was, according to the editor, indeed a pity, but it was probably not unchangeable; “mais INSEAD ne recevra malheureusement pas de candidatures féminines, et ceci en raison du régime d’internat que a été adopté. Mais cette décision n’est pas irrévocable...?”.³⁴⁵

Recruiting men by barring women was in no way a new thing within the field of higher business education, neither in France nor in the US. Harvard Business School, which in many ways INSEAD had been modeled upon, also made use of the same regulations. What was changing though, at least in France, was the official explanation for the exclusion. While the main reason given by the CCIP in 1919, when Louli Sanua asked for women’s right to enter, related to the notion of women and management as irreconcilable, the idea of female middle-managers was no longer foreign in the late-1950s. It was women in senior business positions that were the bottle neck, because “it was considered that European, and particularly French, business circles were *not yet ready* to accept women as *senior* managers”.³⁴⁶ And since INSEAD first of all aimed at screening top-managers, there would be no need to include women yet.

According to the official history of INSEAD, nobody questioned the fact that the institute initially was open to men only. Jean-Louis Barsoux, the author of the volume, writes “no press article from the early years even raised it as an issue”.³⁴⁷ For sure, this might have been the case in relation to the daily and weekly press consulted by Barsoux,

³⁴³ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 208, 1964): 11; (No. 209, 1964): 6; (No. 217, “1916 – 1966 Cinquantaine, supplément au numéro 217”): 5, *Qu’est-ce que l’association HECJF?* (1977): 6.

³⁴⁴ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 187, 1959): 23.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Barsoux, Jean-Louis (2000): 41. Own underlining.

but the issue was – as we have seen – deliberated among the female *cadres* who had graduated from the HECJF. Not to say that the above-mentioned citation from the *HECJF Bulletin* proved a very firm stand or opposition towards the prohibition. The tone of the piece was even a bit playful and ironic. It proves, nevertheless, Barsoux wrong, in the sense that not everybody took the policies for granted as he states. The women operating within the area of business administration, such as the graduates of HECJF, both noticed and opposed it. Also women could practice this new profession called management.

Only one year before the opening of INSEAD, the editor of the *HECJF Bulletin* had come to lecture its readers about this new profession, and its possibilities for women; “Une port s’entrouvre sur une nouvelle profession pour les femmes” was the title.³⁴⁸ What the profession of management consisted of more precisely was, in contrast, more difficult to say. There were many attempts to pinpoint it more specifically, the editor wrote in her article, but for her, management was first of all about allocating the human resources of the organization in the best possible way. And by citing the more unknown words of Taylor, that “The principle object of management should be to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for each employee”, she tried to link the new area with women’s actual possibilities of learning and knowledge. In her opinion, it was evident that the knowledge and techniques required to run a business enterprise, were as available to a woman as to a man. “Toute comme un homme elle peut se spécialiser suivant ses goûts sur l’une quelconque des techniques qui concourent à l’organisation d’une entreprise.”³⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, “la majorité des femmes peuvent s’assimiler les techniques pratiquées par la bonne moyenne des hommes”.³⁵⁰ Thus, the only obstacle preventing women from taking control was the prevailing mentality and culture of those in charge already; i.e. men. She explains:

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 186, 1958): 3 – 5.

³⁴⁹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 186, 1958): 4 – 5). See Chapter 5 and 6.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

Le seul obstacle à une intervention féminine en France vient encore de la prévention indéniable qu'il existe dans l'esprit de certains chefs d'entreprise qui répugnent à une délégation de responsabilité et de commandement à une femme.³⁵¹

According to the editor, the strong aversion against female command was the only reason, or explanation, as to why the gate to the new profession were only "half-way" open to women". Fascinatingly, this statement shows that not only were the entrepreneurs of INSEAD right when they argued that the time was not yet ripe for having women in top-business positions, but it also shows that Barsoux' historical account of INSEAD's conservative gender policy is a fair representation of the dominant male discourse. According to men, women could not officially become senior managers. But, from the perspective of the discourses produced and diffused on the margins of the dominant debate, i.e. by the female business graduates, the issue looked differently. Because, even if the editor of the female bulletin noted the same gender mentality used to explain women's exclusion from INSEAD, she also says that women would definitely advance to a superior level over time. Femaleness and superior responsibilities were, therefore, not culturally irreconcilable. What differentiated the women from men was that they needed considerably more time to advance. Thus,

[...] acceptez de débiter dans une entreprise à un poste subalterne, quel qu'il soit, même souvent à un poste qui peut vous sembler peu passionnant. Dans toute activité, même la plus mineure, il y a une façon intelligente de l'exercer et c'est de la façon dont vous accrocherez votre intelligence à ce travail que vous aurez vite fait de vous distinguer de tout des exécutants. Et ce sera là, croyez-moi, le véritable secret de votre réussite future.³⁵²

According to the above-mentioned work-advice or strategy, a woman business graduate should employ her female cunning and intelligence when entering the enterprise for the first time. She should be patient, and show, through hard work and intelligence, that her labor and expertise were of high quality. In this way, a woman could make a business career too, just like her male colleagues.

³⁵¹ Ibid.: 5, "Une porte s'entrouvre...".

³⁵² Ibid.: 5.

Debating 'Women and Management' with Men

It took more than a decade before the newsletter *Hommes et Commerce*, issued by the *anciens élèves* of HEC, made any reference to the existence of female *cadres*.³⁵³ The first commentary originates from 1971, and refers in detail to a round-table discussion held by the Union Nationale des Diplômés d'Écoles Economiques et Commerciales (UNEC) the preceding year.³⁵⁴ The first to speak during this session was a male member, working in recruitment for a French firm, but originally a HEC alumni. He could tell that he had never even thought of employing female *cadres* in his team of salesmen, but that he obviously should, since HECJF could point to the excellent results achieved by their graduates.³⁵⁵ Yet another male graduate from HEC, in trying to explain why few enterprises were running the risk of recruiting female candidates in higher positions, pointed to women's domestic and maternal duties, duties that – in his opinion – disrupted their career possibilities in business. And for good reasons, he said, as "homely tasks and problems" always fell on a woman's shoulder. He continued:

Je suis féministe, mais j'avoue que mariage, maternité, divorce posent aux femmes des quantités de problèmes qui perturbent beaucoup plus la carrière et la vie d'une femme que celle d'un homme, et qui font hésiter l'employeur devant des candidatures féminines.³⁵⁶

A representative of HECJF raised her voice. From her perspective, the above-mentioned readings were neither as straightforwardly gendered nor true. That women's domestic duties necessarily made them into less stable employees was at least not the case, according to her working experiences. By stressing that she – unlike the previous male representative – did not consider herself to be very feminist, she replied in the following manner:

Moi, je ne suis pas spécialement féministe, mais voici assez longtemps que suis comparer les carrières des cadres féminins et de cadres masculins dans notre société. Spécialisés, comme en

³⁵³ BHEC: *Hommes et commerce* (1956 – 1999).

³⁵⁴ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 120, 1971): "Les hommes et l'entreprise: le forum de l'UNEC sure l'emploi des cadres de gestion": 32 – 68.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: 61.

sait, dans les études de marché et enquêtes d'opinion, notre effectif comporte à peu près 50% d'homme et 50% de femmes. Or si l'on fait le bilan sur une assez longue période, 5 ou 10 ans par exemple, on remarque que les cadres les plus anciens, les plus solides, sont précisément nos cadres féminins.³⁵⁷

In contrast to the male interpretation of the problem area, this woman argued that female *cadres* in fact were far more stable than male employees. Reproduction and production were not structurally irreconcilable activities as the men thought. Women were, moreover, far more loyal to the firm where they worked than men.

But what about the mobility of women, another man asked, who represented the large national firm EDF-GDF.

According to his experience, which of course was based on his own company which specialized in energy, women were much less mobile than men. In his opinion, everybody knew that no woman could tell her husband that "Débrouille-toi avec les gosses pour me suivre"³⁵⁸ Accordingly, female *cadres* would always have less brilliant careers than men of equal education, at least if they happened to be married. And if they were not, and for that reason managed to arrive at the top, little would be left of their femininity anyhow, the man continued. "Beaucoup de celles que j'ai vue arriver à des postes importants n'ont d'ailleurs plus grand-chose de féminine."³⁵⁹ But again, if women wanted to make careers equal to men's, they had to work as men, added another male who worked for Banque de Paris. "...je dis toujours à nos débutantes: 'Si vous voulez faire une carrière d'hommes, il vous faudra travailler comme les hommes: mêmes droits, mêmes devoirs'."³⁶⁰

The inherent contradictions in these two latter quotations are indeed interesting. On the one hand, the prevailing argument was that women had to behave and above all work as hard as men, to be able to reach as far as them; "même droits, même devoirs". Yet, as the man working for EDF-GDF pointed out, this strategy entailed a certain risk. A woman heading towards the direction of a company runs the risk of losing her

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.: 61.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.: 62. Can be translated with "Sort it out with the kids and follow me".

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

femininity on the way. She was so to speak masculinized. This signifies that a woman becoming a top-manager was no longer a woman. The question of female top-managers was therefore in itself contradictory or even inappropriate. The male discourses assumed too that the married woman, burdened by domestic responsibilities and childbearing, stood for all female *cadres*, despite the fact that several of the female candidates attending the roundtable discussion were single. There was, as we have seen already, a long tradition in France for wage earning among particularly unmarried women – reaching back to the Great War.

One participant in the debate tried to value women's gender "difference" more positively, however. But unlike the last time this strategy was used, during the economic recession of the 1930s, the voice now belonged to a man, currently working as a consultant.

A la vérité, de nombreux secteurs de l'industrie moderne ont de plus en plus besoin de cadres féminins en raison, de leurs qualités féminines qui sont: l'application, la conscience professionnelle, la finesse, l'amabilité, la compréhension des problèmes humains, l'intuition, l'imagination, le sens artistique, sans oublier un certain type d'autorité dont nous savons tous qu'il vaut bien le nôtre quand il a à s'affirmer.³⁶¹

Women had, according to this male candidate, a certain character that would benefit business communities. As a matter of fact, numerous industrial sectors were in deep need of female *cadres*, simply because of their essential "female" qualities like kindness, intuition, relational character etc, but above all this sense and understanding for other people's problems. The man continued; "Je dirais donc plutôt aux débutantes: 'Si vous voulez faire une belle carrière, ne prenez pas le genre garçons manqué, mais ambitionnez celui de la souriante femme de tête'.³⁶² Following the reasoning of this last member, women should use their femininity and female qualities strategically, and thus stop operating as "half men". France had, besides, this advantage of having a business school for women in particular, he argued, a school that prepared female *cadres supérieurs* of high quality as well as charm.

³⁶¹ Ibid.: 63.

³⁶² Ibid.

...nous avons le privilège de posséder en France, avec l'*HECJF*, une "business school" féminine absolument unique au monde d'où sortent des cadres supérieurs de première force, et fort charmantes de surcroît.³⁶³

In short, the séance within the UNEC community displays that female *cadres* working in – or wanting to work in – business management in the late-1960s and early-1970s in France, were still more or less trapped in the old (bourgeois) doctrine of the "separate spheres". This meant that even though the rhetoric of management was referring to professionalism, efficiency, functionality etc., gender was still perceived as the "natural" sexual division of labor by the male candidates. Of course, the gender conservatism that the male graduates conveyed during the roundtable discussion should not be overstated and vulgarized. Then again, the gender pattern seemed very clear. Whereas the representatives of *HECJF* were speaking a gender language of equality or sameness, the men mixed this up with a discourse of "difference". According to the male participants, women were the only ones having a "problem", and were thus displaced from a norm that was taken for granted as ruling the business world. Gender was for this reason offered as the sole reason why male and female business graduates faced different problems and obstacles, not qualification, competence, experience etc. As a matter of fact, the men boasted *HECJF* for its quality and success.

On the other hand, gender remained the major dividing line between the sexes. Only one man tried to set women's differences in a more positive light, while the female representatives did everything they could to escape their own gender by stressing the attributes and qualifications that unified them, such as formal qualification and schooling, instead of those qualities that differentiated them, like gender. This illustrates that when gender was the main object of concern, "the line between the useful and the 'natural' was blurred", as Joan Scott has pointed out in her enlightening essay on the woman worker.³⁶⁴ To allocate the human resources of the organization in the best possible way was then suddenly no longer possible, which showed that the logic of professional management was inclined towards male experiences and power. Thus, the continuation of past ideas

³⁶³ Ibid.

and values on gender, and especially the tendency to define a woman in accordance with her femininity, and thus particularity, is strikingly strong. The arrival of professional management had, in other words, not overthrown gender as a structuring element of the office. What it reduced was the role of gender in the field of higher business education. The admiration of the American business-school model was not total, however. Among the UNEC community there seems to have been a growing skepticism about the blind adoption of this model towards the end of the decade. As an ESCP graduate put it: "D'ailleurs, la traduction littérale de 'Graduate Business School' n'est-elle pas 'Ecole Supérieure de Commerce'?"³⁶⁵

Mounting Anti-Americanism and Power to the *Anciens Elèves*

The UNEC forum, which was organized only by the graduates of the "old" Parisian business schools, had been formed in September 1969 to counterbalance the negative effect of the rising number of business graduates in France during the 1960s.³⁶⁶ The arrival of *gestion* in French universities after 1968, in addition to the mushrooming of new business schools and programs in the preceding decade, had made management into one of the most expansive branches of French higher education.³⁶⁷ As it goes without saying, this implied that the amount of business students was growing rapidly, reaching the level wanted by French technocrats years before. Yet for the "old" ones, in the meaning those originating from and within the commercial *grandes écoles*, such a situation nurtured new strategies of distinction. And as earlier, elite-school cooperation, in combination with a firm regulation of offered places, was seen as the best way to compensate for or prevent the symbolic devaluation of degrees and diplomas.

The rising demand as well as supply of higher business education had made many older graduates afraid of social stagnation and even devaluation. This situation gave not only birth to UNEC, which bound the "Parisian business-school quartette" closer

³⁶⁴ Scott, Joan (1993): 402.

³⁶⁵ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 120, 1971): "Les hommes et l'entreprise: le forum de l'UNEC sur l'emploi des cadres de gestion": 56.

³⁶⁶ *Journal Officiel de la République Française* 21.11.1969, *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 231, 1970): 20.

³⁶⁷ Lehericy, Luc & T. Pechon (1990). For an overview of the number of business schools that were established between 1960 and 1970s, see Appendix 7, Table II.

together, but also to the Conference of the Grandes Écoles, which was formed in these years, fuelled by the experiences harvested during and after May 68.³⁶⁸

Said to be propagating elitism in French society, the *grandes écoles* were under heavy critique during the social-political turmoil of the 1960s, a critique that ironically enough strengthened the elite-school fraternity in the longer run, while those criticizing it continued to be “left out”. The Conference of the Grandes Écoles, created in 1969 by the country’s most prominent engineering and business schools, contributed to this. By coordinating actions and promotions with regard to the industrial community, and by encouraging tighter relations among its members, this organization was established as an important counter force to the democratization of higher education. Today this “noble” circle has more than 150 institutions of higher learning as members, which in short demonstrates that democratizing and diversifying the field of higher business education has not necessarily been as straightforward as institutions like FNEGE and CCIP had foreseen in the 1960s. To break or transform the elitist structures guiding and shaping the field for more than a century was easier said than done.

The main reason for this was the power held or achieved by the *anciens élèves*. There was, in other words, an evident tension between Americanism and anti-Americanism, reformism and conservatism. HEC’s alumni welcomed, for example, the introduction of *gestion* unconditionally in the late 1950s, but feared and opposed the American model as soon as it was challenged the *grande école* structure and fraternity they belonged to and clearly depended on.³⁶⁹ The alumni of HEC also met the news about a state-owned management university with major skepticism. During an extraordinary General Assembly, held in December 1966, the President of the *anciens élèves* explicitly called for solidarity with one another and with the *grande école* model, as he was worried that the newcomers from the university would overtake the *anciens*, and that the acronym “HEC” would lose its distinction and value.³⁷⁰ He repeated:

³⁶⁸ Takagi, Junko & Laurence de Carlo (2003): 41.

³⁶⁹ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 94, 1967): “Assemblée générale extraordinaire du 21 décembre 1966”: 119 – 129.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: 122.

L'HEC possède son marché et nous savons tous qu'il doit, d'abord à une formation en commun au sein d'une grande Ecole où le caractère et l'esprit d'entreprise se forment mieux, plus complètement et plus intensément qu'à l'Université, et ensuite, à son Association, à notre Association qui a été, depuis son origine, le fer de lance de notre sigle.³⁷¹

A second example of this mounting skepticism and fear, but also arrogance, amongst the *anciens* emerged in relation to the Chamber's plan to make HEC a real American-styled graduate business school, and to relocate ESCP and HECJF from Paris to Jouy-en-Josas in order to make them into one.³⁷² Even if the project was successfully stopped by the action of the *anciens*, we shall take a closer look at this event. It exemplifies, in my opinion, the power and influence of the *anciens élèves* in the latter part of the 1960s, as well as the growing anti-American strand in the French public debate. This too affected the course of the ongoing modernization of French higher business education.

Taking a Critical stand towards 'the American Model'

When the plan to turn HEC into a graduate business school was made public in the summer of 1967, the alumni took immediate action. The *anciens élèves* wrote immediately to Mme Millot, the president of the Chamber's general commission of education, expressing their greatest concern about the position and rank of HEC within the French landscape of elite education. The argument used against the proposed transformation was not of the nationalistic or anti-American kind presented by de Gaulle, however. It was not the "soulless and materialistic" aspects of America that concerned the association of HEC, but the social status of the school.³⁷³ The graduates were, according to the letter, extremely attached to their title, and nobody wanted it to be

³⁷¹ Ibid.: 121.

³⁷² ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5). Concerning the reorientation of CCIP's institutions of higher learning to the "Assemblée Générale de la CCIP", the 15.09.1967, directed by Mme Millot, *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 237, 1971): 5. The division between undergraduate and graduate studies (in French called 2ème and 3ème cycle) arrived with the decision to make *gestion* into a university discipline in 1966. Coupled with the "American model", this was the reason why CCIP decided to reorganize their establishments in 1967. Turning HEC into a "3ème cycle" institution, i.e. a graduate business school, would in addition facilitate better communication with the international scene, since the *grande école* model is rather unknown to foreigners. See Marc Meuleau (1997) with "Commentaire" by Roland Reiter: 72 – 74.

³⁷³ Richard, Kuisel (1993): 145.

replaced by a new and unknown name. “Les Anciens Elèves demeurent extrêmement attachés au titre HEC comme à leur Ecoles.”³⁷⁴ To preserve the long tradition of business education in France was thus of great importance, the alumni argued, and above all to secure HEC’s central position within it.

Il importe, en tout état de cause, de maintenir au range qu’il [HEC] occupe actuellement en France, c’est-à-dire le premier, et pas tous le moyens appropriés, le niveau de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales parmi les grandes Ecoles françaises.³⁷⁵

Also the students of CCIP’s second business school, i.e. École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris, took action. For them conflict between the CCIP and the HEC association was the perfect opportunity to reclaim the autonomy lost in 1964, when they were attached to the acronym ESCAE (Écoles supérieures de commerce et d’administration des entreprises).³⁷⁶ As result of the quarrel, the male graduates reclaimed the title ESCP.³⁷⁷ A couple of years later the president of the students’ union said: “Sup de Co est devenue ESCP et a accompli une remontée étonnante compte tenue de ses moyens financiers limités”.³⁷⁸ In this way, the bond between ESCP and the regional business schools was finally broken, too. The strategy was, in other words, for it to distinguish itself symbolically from the regional competitors through reintroducing the school’s old acronym – which carried a far longer history than that of the “Sup de Co” or, as it had now become, ESCAE.

The *anciennes élèves* of HECJF handled the issue somehow differently. No protest letter was written, and no campaigns were launched to keep the acronym “HEC pour les jeunes filles”. But the president of the *anciennes* as well as the director decided to take up the fight with the two other schools. The strategy was to modernize the school’s curriculum further, and by “donner à l’association un nouveau visage en

³⁷⁴ Letter from the President of the “Association des Anciens Elèves HEC” addressed to Mme Millot, President of the “Commission général de l’Enseignement de la CCIP” September 1967, referred to by Olivier Thorat (1994): 84/Annex 1.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ ACCIP, CCIP (1996): *Répertoire numérique des servies anciennes (archives collectées de 1808 à 1986)* written by Olivier Cottarel: 112.

³⁷⁷ See Chapter 6.

³⁷⁸ *Hermes* (No. 32, 1972): 25.

assurant".³⁷⁹ Being afraid that a geographical relocation of the three schools to Jouy-en-Josas would reduce the total number of female business candidates, the two-sex model was safeguarded, although most of the women thought that coeducation would be the best solution in a longer perspective. But for the time being, the school was considered the best way to guarantee "le maintien de quelque 150 diplômées chaque année".³⁸⁰ As a result, HEC's dominant position among the French *grandes écoles* was maintained. The ESCP, in contrast, recovered some of its lost institutional strength and respect, while HECJF began to sharpen its position, proving its equality with the male establishments.

This little episode illustrates, in my opinion, that the elite school mentality above all was reproduced by the *anciens élèves*, and not by the CCIP. It shows, moreover, that the French business schools were continuously following the old model of elite education, although they had been considerably reformed in terms of content, under the influence of the American model. This is not to say that the rapprochement with the American model was weak or that it was rejected by the French business schools – as some scholars have argued.³⁸¹ Concerning the content it was rather the opposite case, since their disciplinary profile had, for a long time, been both low and feeble. The American model of business education had, therefore, a major effect on remodeling or reforming the French business schools. The introduction of *gestion* and a more functional-oriented teaching, matching the usual divisions of a corporation, equipped the business schools with indispensable resources and legitimacy. What I suggest, conversely, is that the institutional reorientation *à l'Américaine* was carried out within the structure, logic and above all culture of the *grandes écoles* – which were preserved

³⁷⁹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 237, 1971): 5. This was partly done by making it a center for perfection, offering management training courses to its members and creating a better placement office, where the students got help to find work according to qualifications. The school launched a completely new third-year curricular structure in 1971, based on the six following fields of specialization: "Informatique de gestion, Marketing et Innovation, Etudes de Marketing, Commerce International, Gestion et Etudes financier, Administration et Finance" (*HECJF Bulletin*, No. 239, 1972: 28 – 30).

³⁸⁰ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 233, 1970): 3

³⁸¹ Engwall, Lars & Vera Zamagni (eds. 1998): 11 – 12. The idea of the French business schools' resistance towards the "American model", proffered by Lars Engwall and others, can be said to be more valid on the level of educational structure than on the level of content, if a distinction between these two levels can be made at all.

particularly by the graduates and their respective alumni associations, but also by the French school system in general.³⁸²

For instance, the gap between the *prepa* and the *concours*, on the one hand, and the business programs, on the other, did not necessarily diminish with the introduction of new disciplines and scientific requirements. Interviews with students attending HEC in the early 1970s shows that the cultural gap between the active “Americanized” pedagogy and the teaching methods then dominant in the French *lycées* and *prepa*, was significant. One put the tension as follows:

I remember we had the *études de cas* [case studies], and that I found it very strange compared to all we had learned before. Probably this was done to make us understand that dealing with business, a real case was different from dealing with some kind of general theory of management action. For me, this was very alienating, but I got through.³⁸³

This candidate found, as stated, the “American way” of teaching strange, or even “alienating” – i.e. disconnected from the “French way”. Discussing open cases, where there were no fixed answers, poorly matched the French tradition of learning. While the teacher provided the students with the right answers at high school and the *prepa*, the case study method suddenly played the ball to the students.³⁸⁴ In the view of one of the current professors, the students were all products of the French school system, embedded in a totally different pedagogical tradition.

Clearly fond of the “American model” himself, he explained the students’ reaction as an expression of immaturity. The French school system treated the pupils like children, for which reason the students were simply “too immature for open-end case studies”.³⁸⁵ But if we compare this professorial view with the experiences harvested from the students themselves, the picture turns. Most of the ten students interviewed from this period expressed a kind of disappointment regarding the content at HEC, in addition to an

³⁸² *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 114, 1970): 17.

³⁸³ Interview with former HEC student, 21.03.2001, Paris 11ème.

³⁸⁴ Interview with Professor Jacqueline Laufer, 24.2.2001, Paris 13ème.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

estrangement.³⁸⁶ One of them said, for example, the following when I asked about the encounter with the two different systems:

In *école prepa* we had very interesting things; twentieth-century history, from the industrial revolution onwards, and geography, philosophy and a very good maths program. And French of course, where we very much worked on making resumes of texts, formulating texts in different parts and ways. What we learned was to work very fast. In fact, working fast was very much what we learned, but the *prepa* is not a program. Because in contrast to the *classe prepa scientifique*, where the *prepa* is connected to what comes after, there is no strong link or connection at all between the *prepa* HEC and the studies that followed. The studies at HEC are all were very general, and in mathematics we did only very easy stuff, some statistics, financial calculation etc. In other words, we didn't need such a high-level math course in the *prepa* and the *concours* to do what we did at HEC, not at all.³⁸⁷

Another ex-students expressed the gap between the two systems as follows:

The *classes préparatoire* was exceptionally interesting, but there was a huge difference between what we learned there and the studies at HEC. It was much more practical knowledge at HEC.³⁸⁸

There was, in other words, no strong – or direct – relationship between preparatory school, entrance exams and business-school curricula even after the educational reform of HEC and other business schools, which had taken place during the 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Whereas the primary aim of the *prepa* and *concours* was to select and cultivate an elite of hard-working students, the business program was largely more practically oriented – having the intention of training future managers. That the students interrogated the difference, and felt confused about it, is not very difficult to understand. However, no-one really wanted to get rid of the *grandes écoles* system the elite-business schools operated within. Both the “users” of higher business education i.e. middle-class families and their children, and the system’s “finished products”, i.e. the *anciens élèves*, continued supporting the rigid selection procedure. Interviews with former students show, in addition, that they preferred the French system to the American

³⁸⁶ See Bibliography/Interviews.

³⁸⁷ Interview with former HEC student, 18.02.2000, Paris – Villepinte.

model, arguing that the former was far more intellectually challenging than the latter.³⁸⁹ This provided the French field of higher business education with double standards; one related to France elite school tradition and another to the American model of graduate business education.

Translating 'the American Model' into French

The field of French business education was characterized by a mounting schizophrenia in the late 1960s. On the one hand, there was a growing sense of self-protection and skepticism against the American model, while, on the other hand, there was also a mounting critique of the French system. This double logic was motivated by the thriving competition from the many new providers of management education, but similar notions were efficiently diffused elsewhere, too. Servan-Schreiber's book, *Le Défi Américain*, wherein he portrayed the heavy American industrial investment in the Common Market as Europe's new problem – or challenge – sold like hot cakes. Following him, the US was set as Europe's new challenge; "The Common Market has become a new Far East for American businessmen", he wrote.³⁹⁰ Challenging American rivalry depended on the strengthening as well as liberation of Europe's human capital: "the liberation of imprisoned energies by a revolution in our social methods – a revolution to revitalize the elites and even relations between men".³⁹¹ One remedy, according to Servan-Schreiber, was to transform the relationship between business, the university, and the government, while another was to broaden and to intensify the education of young people.³⁹²

For elite-school alumni, like those of HEC, this postulate carried a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, it supported a demand for independence from the US, while on the other hand, it focused on modernization and renewal of the French educational system and mentality, a project that had been closely linked to the American model. HEC had undergone a major transformation thanks to the import of American "know-how", at the same time as this knowledge and methodology "threatened" the

³⁸⁸ Interview with former HEC student, 21.03.2001, Paris 11ème.

³⁸⁹ See Bibliography/ Interviews.

³⁹⁰ Servan-Schreiber, Jean-Jacques (1967/1969): 40.

³⁹¹ Ibid. 147.

³⁹² Ibid. 147.

French social system. Thus, the final solution was to modify and adopt the foreign model to the prevailing mentality and business culture of France and Europe, which in many ways was very different from the American.³⁹³ In the words of André Blondeau, CCIP's director of education at the time:

L'enseignement supérieur des affaires repose sur la transmission d'un certain nombre de techniques, mais aussi sur une philosophie propre à chaque civilisation. Jusqu'où le bout de chemin, que nous suivons actuellement la main dans la main avec notre modèle américain, pourrait-il nous conduire avant qu'il ne soit nécessaire de nous séparer, ce qui ne veut pas dire de nous opposer ?³⁹⁴

Management education concerns not only the teaching of certain techniques, Blondeau argued. It also mirrors a certain philosophy or worldview, specific for each civilization and country. To readjust the American model to the French educational culture hence was the best way to go. Besides, he continued, "la France a commencé l'enseignement supérieur commerciale a une date antérieure même aux premières créations américaines".³⁹⁵ To assume bluntly that the French tradition was inferior to the American model was thus unnecessary, despite the fact that it had its peculiarities and inequities such as the *prepa* and the *concours*. The high degree of selection and competition on the basis of merits represented the soul of French educational system.

The link between the French and the American model was therefore increasingly evident; the former ruled over the latter. As the fascination with the "American way" matured, professors began using French case studies instead of American ones at HEC, and the open-end structure was increasingly more prearranged. It seems thus reasonable to argue that the elite-school culture continued to work like the field's main filter, assessing any development by preventing and modifying new elements which were not constant with its inherent fundamentals and functions.³⁹⁶ Still, members of the CCIP and the alumni had to admit that the prevailing hybrid of a system had its weaknesses too.

³⁹³ The demand for French case studies instead of American was, for example, growing in the late-1960s and 1970s.

³⁹⁴ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 114, 1970): 17.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Larsen, Eirinn (2003 b): 176 – 177.

The students who were being selected for the Parisian business schools were a very homogenous group of young people. As pinpointed already, the French business schools practiced a selection process that was everything but original.³⁹⁷ Primarily fashioned by the example of the elite schools of engineering, though sanctioned by the authorities, there was little distinguishing the business school's entry examination from the *concours* of Polytechnique (X), for example, which is a military school.³⁹⁸ This implied that rigorous exams in mathematics were held, and combined with written and oral tests in subjects of general culture. Almost everybody who passed these had therefore a upper-secondary degree in science, while only a few had a combination of mathematics and economy, for example, or technology or even humanities. In brief, the qualities celebrated were all attached to intellectual capabilities – not personal qualities or commitment to business.

Seeking Diversity within the Rule of Elitism

The reorientation towards the American model involved seriously questioning the homogeneity, but also the rigidity, of the existing system and students. Joining a business school was long regarded – as well as practiced – as a “second choice” to engineering. Put simply, if a boy was brilliant in mathematics and abstract thinking in high school, he would most likely prepare for an engineering school. Were his talents in these areas just good, in contrast, a business school would often be seen as a good second option, at least if he belonged to the social milieu valuing this kind of instruction. Business training was thus something many young people just happened to enter, because of established conventions and the school-system as much as because of family background.

With regard to the progress of the business schools as providers of top-managers, low motivation had clear negative effects on the learning process and thus also on the

³⁹⁷ Ibid. Interview with Assisting Professors Charles-Henri Besseyre des Hortes, 14.12.1999, Jouy-en-Josas.

HEC developed a specialization in public management in the early 1970s, a specialization that in many ways can be read as an attempt to readjust the study program to the ideological climate and the social forces of the time. According to an ex-HEC student, the attempt had little success, since the business schools had no tradition of educating candidates for the public sector. See Eirinn Larsen (2003b): 172.

³⁹⁸ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5): *Rapport sur les procédures de sélection et d'orientation non traditionnelles pratiquées par les établissements d'enseignements et de perfectionnement de la CCIP* (21 février 1974, par Mme Millot): 27.

quality of the students being selected and educated. HEC professors I have talked to remember that they often struggled with unmotivated students at this time, a trend that was boosted further by the happenings of May 68. Leftist students all had a very strong opposition towards management and moneymaking.³⁹⁹ In the words of one professor, such students seldom headed for business careers, but specialized for ideological reasons either in agro-business or public management. Others again were just taking the school because it was a road into *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), which educated civil servants. One of the ex-HEC students evoked, in fact, precisely the same notions as the professor when she said:

You know at that time we all thought that business was no good morally speaking. Therefore I chose something like public management, because I first thought I could work in a public environment – there were a lot of public companies in France at that time. I was also thinking of taking ENA.⁴⁰⁰

The fading interest in business among those being selected worried the CCIP. As a counter policy to this weak ambition and motivation they decided upon various ameliorations in order to “sortir du système traditionnel des épreuves de connaissance et d'intelligence”.⁴⁰¹ Ironically, the first to introduce a more personal-oriented test system was not HEC, but HECJF. Given its long tradition in stimulating and preparing their students' individuality and autonomy, HECJF developed a more personalized test system as early as the mid-1960s.⁴⁰² The test, focusing on the candidate's capacity and quality in addition to potential for professional development, took place in front of a jury of three – the director herself together with two *agrégé* in history/geography and humanities, respectively. This kind of dialogue among four people, it was argued, revealed “la

³⁹⁹ Interview with Professor Georges Trepo, 5 & 10.11.1999, Jouy-en-Josas, and interviews with former HEC students. See Bibliography/Interviews.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with former HEC student, 28.01.2000, Jouy-en-Josas.

⁴⁰¹ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5): *Rapport sur les procédures de sélection et d'orientation non traditionnelles pratiquées par les établissements d'enseignements et de perfectionnement de la CCIP* (21 février 1974, par Mme Millot): 27 – 28.

⁴⁰² Chapter 4.

personnalité et l'intelligence plus finement et plus fidèlement que les travaux écrits".⁴⁰³ Preparing for managerial work depended not only on specific techniques, the school's Director, Mme Meniszez stated. The students needed also to possess certain qualities complementary to intelligence, and it was considered necessary to weed out those who were not capable of undertaking responsibilities:

En effet, la réussite dans les carrières auxquelles l'Ecole prépare ses élèves ne requiert pas seulement une connaissance approfondie des méthodes modernes de gestion ; elle doit également prendre appui sur des *aptitudes* qu'une pédagogie active peut développer mais non créer. Il s'agit donc de détecter ces qualités complémentaires de l'intelligence et du savoir sans lesquelles on ne peut guère assumer de responsabilités.⁴⁰⁴

In accordance with the guidelines, HECJF looked for girls with the ability to reflect and articulate clearly (a clear diction), and to reason rigorously. In addition they should have the right fighting spirit (*la combativité*), presence of mind, and neatness of work and appearance.⁴⁰⁵ These qualities appeared relatively gender neutral, except the latter "netteté", which has a clear association with the female sex. Neatness or tidiness has traditionally been thought of as a female quality, and thus an essential complement to other characteristics like fighting spirit and individuality, for example. HEC, however, took a much more aggressive tone when it developed new admission policies.

Two hyper-competitive forms of examination was introduced at HEC in 1970, with the aim of improving the diversity of the students, as well as their commitment to the values of management and business, making "les maths [...] un peu moins importantes".⁴⁰⁶ The first assessment, later known as the "tête à tête", was a collective

⁴⁰³ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5): *Rapport sur les procédures de sélection et d'orientation non traditionnelles pratiques par les établissements d'enseignements et de perfectionnement de la CCIP* (21 février 1974, par Mme Millot): 32 – 33. Agrégé = holder of the agrégation, which is a high-level competitive examination for recruitment of teachers.

⁴⁰⁴ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 114, 1970): "Formation HECJF" par Madame Meniszez, Directrice de l'École HECJF: 60.

⁴⁰⁵ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5): *Rapport sur les procédures de sélection et d'orientation non traditionnelles pratiques par les établissements d'enseignements et de perfectionnement de la CCIP* (21. février 1974, par Mme Millot): 32.

⁴⁰⁶ *Le Figaro*, 24.11.1972: 12.

pro et contra debate in a group of four over a given topic.⁴⁰⁷ Each student had 15 minutes to prepare for the *séance* alone, though the actual discussion took place in front of two professors, and an audience of as many as 100 people. A former HEC student recaptured this situation in the following way:

It was very hot that summer, in July, and there were many of us taking the *concours*. We had written and oral exams, and during the “tête à tête” people could come and listen. So the public was judging the students presenting for the *concours* too. We talked to the professors, but the room was full of people listening, and the next year I did the same again. It was considered to be a kind of entertainment. Yes, it was tough, but the atmosphere was not bad because we were there with people that we had taken our *prepa* with. In fact we were quite many from *Louis le Grand*, so there was also a lot of support.⁴⁰⁸

After the collective session, the applicants were examined individually for about 15 minutes. This type of examination enabled the examiners to define the student's personality better, and to “détecter si la candidature correspond aux critères de la sélection” – which above all concerned the candidates autonomy and his capacity for adapting to work with others.⁴⁰⁹ “Les éléments les plus déterminants de la sélection à ce niveau concernent l'autonomie du candidat et son adaptation aux autres.”⁴¹⁰

The two attributes introduced by the new admission policies at HEC were both clearly gendered. Whereas autonomy has traditionally been looked upon as a male quality, the ability to adjust to others is more in accordance with the bourgeois notion of womanhood. What strikes one about this coupling, however, is their complementarity, which gives us a clear impression of the business organization as a family, depending on different roles and attributes. Who carried what roles, in contrast, is not so evident anymore. HEC's graduates needed, according to the guidelines, both qualities – the traditional masculine values as much as the more feminine ones. The different ideals are evened out when held together. The competitive spirit of HEC's new test system tells us,

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.: 29.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with former HEC student, 18.02.2000, Villepinte – Paris.

⁴⁰⁹ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (5): *Rapport sur les procédures de sélection et d'orientation non traditionnelles pratiques par les établissements d'enseignements et de perfectionnement de la CCIP* (21 février 1974, par Mme Millot): 29.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

nonetheless, that public performance and affirmation were the continuing dominant ideals, which have clear historical references to the construction of nineteenth-century bourgeois masculinity. The attempt to diversify the selection process, to give a more homogeneous and committed group of students, resulted therefore in the institutionalization of certain female and male attributes previously upheld by the bourgeoisie. This illustrates rather well how the development of HEC and HECJF had been – and still were – affected by a certain social group's ideas and values of masculinity and femininity. However, an interesting change in the new admission rules was the articulation, as well as the depersonalization, of the very same values. That the male students were to have qualities other than strength and autonomy indicates that the bourgeois mentality of the schools was not unshakable or persistent. Instead, it was transforming into something new.

One possible explanation for the new test system employed by HEC from 1970 onwards was the changing, and increasingly radical, youth culture. To assume that a boy preparing for a business *grande école* wanted to work in business after graduation was not as evident as before. Subsequently, in addition to gauging the intellectual capabilities of the prospective students, new ways of differentiating the “suitable” from the “unsuitable” were believed to be necessary.⁴¹¹ Another explanation is – of course – the emergence of a professional notion of management and leadership, encouraging previously tacit traits to be spelled out in order to depict and systematize what management actually was about.⁴¹² By emphasizing management as a many-sided function as well as a science and profession, gendered behavior like autonomy, authority but also flexibility and sensitivity to others were “professionalized” as it were, and in this way were detached from the actual person, man or woman. But this does not necessarily imply that gender lost relevance as a source of distinction and power in the firm. The debate about women and management which was analyzed previously in this chapter, gives us an idea of how important gender still was in structuring the business firm as well as its systems of meaning. What was about to change, though, was the importance of

⁴¹¹ ESCP and ESSEC introduced similar interviews and tests, as a complement to the rigorous written and oral examinations.

⁴¹² Henry Mintzberg's work on *The Nature of Managerial Work*, first published in 1973, is here an excellent example.

gender in the field of higher business education. Since the “new paradigm” had given the business schools both scientific and professional legitimacy, masculinity or femininity lost some of its importance, as a source of power and of resources within the field. A situation of this kind made it also less relevant to keep men and women separate from each other. CCIP’s new management institute, the ISA, gives an indication of this direction.

Gender in Transition

The failed attempt to “Americanize” HEC further in 1967 resulted in the opening of yet another management institute under the patronage of the CCIP, i.e. the *Institute Supérieure des Affaires* (ISA). Evidently, the founding of ISA was a way of consolidating the scene after the conflict between certain groups eager for reforms within the CCIP, on the one hand, and the *anciens élèves*, on the other.⁴¹³ A second interpretation, one that is perhaps more professed than the former by French scholars, is to see the new institution as a result of a growing competition within the field, following the creation of Paris-Dauphine in 1968.⁴¹⁴ Being an institution of the “third level”, Paris-Dauphine “amena la CCIP à créer de toute urgence une formation de 3ème cycle pour concurrences cette nouvelle-née”.⁴¹⁵ ISA hence was CCIP’s institutional answer to the public newcomer and competitor, Dauphine. Like the Norwegian AFF, ISA was set up to make use of the same intellectual resources as HEC.⁴¹⁶ The institute was, nonetheless, institutionally autonomous from both HEC and the *grande école* structure. The candidates targeted were those already holding a professional degree, preferably from prestigious engineering schools like Polytechnique (X), and who after graduation had worked long enough to know what business was about. ISA hence became a post-graduate school, providing a one-year-long “formation professionnelle approfondie dans le domaine de la gestion et les préparer aux responsabilités de direction d’entreprise”.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ This episode reminds one very much of the history of CPA, which was established not only as a response to the “American model” in 1930, but also because of the failure to modernize HEC following American standards in the inter war period. See Chapter 6.

⁴¹⁴ Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle & Fabienne Pavis (2001): 37.

⁴¹⁵ Pigeyre, Frédérique (1986): 121.

⁴¹⁶ This was also the reason why ISA was located at Jouy-en-Josas, and not in the capital.

⁴¹⁷ Meuleau, Marc (1997): 67, Reiter, Roland (1997): 72.

Yet unlike HEC, ISA had no admission policy barring women, and one might again ask, why not?

Apart from the law of 1966, stating that women should have access to professional training on equal terms with men, ISA's decision to allow women in has to be seen in the light of both the national and international trends in management education of the time.⁴¹⁸ Apart from the founding of Dauphine, which was open to both sexes, the most prestigious institutions of management training had commenced accepting female candidates. Both Harvard and INSEAD decided to adopt a more woman-friendly attitude and practice, and needless to say, the program of ISA was clearly informed by the MBA program offered in both places.⁴¹⁹ To continue excluding female applicants would be, in this light, both strategically and legally out of date. A gender "liberalization" or "deregulation" represented at the same time no immediate danger of rapid feminization of the institute. ISA expected to recruit most of its candidates from the French elite schools, of which many had not yet introduced mixed classes or were just about to do so. X, for example, was closed "au deuxième sexe" until the academic year 1972/73.⁴²⁰ École Centrale, on the other hand, which had been accepting female students since 1917, still had less than 5% women. Coeducation represented, therefore, no direct threat to the male hegemony in management training.⁴²¹

The mass entry of women into institutions of higher learning was, nonetheless, a new trait in the 1960s. By 1974/75, 48, 9% of all university students in France were women, and coupled with the student movement and a novel concern for women rights, this made a compelling drive for change of the established gender order.⁴²² Even though

⁴¹⁸ Prost, Antoine (1968): 471, 551 (referring to the law on "3 décembre 1966, sur la formation professionnelle").

⁴¹⁹ Barsoux, Jean-Louis (2000): 91 – 93. At INSEAD the discussion on *la mixité* emerged as a result of an application from a woman, who asked for permission to start even though the institute was open to male applicants only.

⁴²⁰ *L'Express* (No. 1100, 7 août 1972): "Major de Polytechnique" by Françoise Giroud (in *Françoise Giroud et Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber dans L'Express – textes pour l'étude de la langue et de la civilisation françaises*, présentation de Ross Steel, 1977): 23, *La vie des cadres* (No. 4, octobre – novembre 1972): "Les filles à l'assaut des grandes écoles": 26 – 27. The Minister of Defense, Monsieur Debré, decreed *la mixité* at Polytechnique in 1972.

⁴²¹ Women accounted for only 5% of those attending ISA between 1969 and 1979 (Sylvie, Olivo-Creuzé, 1979: 72).

⁴²² A dominant feature of recent trends has been a constant progression of women in higher education since the beginning of the 20th century. It boomed, however, in the 1960s, and ten years later there was – as

questions related to women's issues were almost absent in the context of May 68, there was a rising feminist consciousness in France throughout the 1960s – as in most Western countries.⁴²³ Of course, compared to the US, feminist policy concerns were thrown into the public limelight relatively late in France. The first feminist organization established within the “second-wave spirit” was established in May 1970, carrying the name *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (MLF)*.⁴²⁴ France had, moreover, no governmental agency on women's issues until 1974, which was initially arranged to encourage the implementation of the 1972 law on Equal Pay.⁴²⁵ This was two years later than in Norway. The organized women's liberation movement, creating the foundation of what we Scandinavians often refer to as “State-Feminism”, had therefore no direct impact on CCIP's decision to allow women to apply for ISA.

On the other hand, ideals and values concerning gender were in transition, especially among adolescents and women. With prolonged compulsory education, and women's entrance into institutions of higher education, the young would spend considerable more time together, with the consequence that friendships between girls and boys evolved as a more “natural thing”. Besides, girls started dressing like their male friends, i.e. in trousers, and certain educational disciplines within higher education were becoming increasingly feminized. The gradual introduction of coeducation in primary and secondary education throughout the decade made this happen, but political agitation against world events like the Vietnam War played a part, too.⁴²⁶ A common “enemy” had

stated – almost as many female as male students in French universities. However, women were – and still are – predominant in the humanities and pharmacy, whereas the percentage is lower in the sciences.

⁴²³ Moi, Toril (1985): 95, Smith, Bonnie G. (1989): 527, Mazur, Amy G. (1995): 71. The question of sexual liberation was, however, an important aspect of May 68. Many of the students opposed the existing practice of dormitories, placing male and female students in different blocks when students living outside the university campus met with no such restrictions.

⁴²⁴ It is important to mention, though, that an organization called *Mouvement Démocratique Féminin (MDF)* already existed at this time. Founded in 1962 by the socialist Colette Audry, MDF was an important organization for non-communist women of the Left. But unlike the MLF, Socialist women led it. It was thus more party-oriented than many of the women's movement groups founded in the late-1960s and early-1970s, although women active in the MDF were prominent in promoting explicit feminist goals when Mitterand formed the new Socialist party in 1971.

⁴²⁵ Mazur, Amy G. (1995): 102 – 103. This agency called the *Sécretariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine (SECF)*, was under the direction of Françoise Giroud, deputy minister of women's status from 1974 – 1976. Giroud had from early on voiced women's rights in her own journal *L'Express*, a magazine with a solid circle of readers among the French *cadres*.

⁴²⁶ In France, few schools practiced coeducation until it was announced by the state in 1962/1963 in relation to lower secondary education (*collège*), and then in primary education two years later. The process

to some extent a unifying effect on the young – regardless of their sex. So had the New Left, dominated by various shades of Marxism, from Trotskyism (anti-Stalinism) to Maoism.

Reforming Elite Education in the Light of 'May 68'

As the 1960s had brought a larger part of the population into upper secondary and higher education, social tension between the open universities and the closed elite schools was an unavoidable result. The number of students enrolled at universities had, so to speak, exploded. Over only the previous twenty years, between 1946 and 1968, the total number of university students increased from 129,000 to 540,000. The elite schools, in contrast, hosted only 89,000 candidates at the end of this period.⁴²⁷ Overcrowded lecture halls and impersonal teaching was, therefore, an unknown phenomenon for most elite-school students.⁴²⁸ The university students, in contrast, of which many had failed to enter the "the Royal Way", faced these inequalities every day.⁴²⁹ But the student protests, starting out at the University of Nanterre in March 1968, was to attract far more people than students and high-school students only. Also workers, elite-school graduates and middle-class professionals "including a number who would later vote conservative" joined in.⁴³⁰ Apparently, there were many who felt betrayed by a system which advocated equality in chances but which actually produced rigid hierarchies and social inequalities.

The authoritarian attitude or style of leadership promoted by President de Gaulle suited, moreover, the new generation poorly. His paternalism was found to be out of date. So was the Ministry of Education, which supported the dual system of elite education that was particular for France. But unlike the president, who resigned one year after the

accelerated further with the events of May 1968, and reached the French *lycées* from 1969 onwards. For more on this, see Françoise Lelièvre & Claude Lelièvre (1991): 174 – 208.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.: 343, Prost, Antoine (1981): 23, Tableau 1.1.

⁴²⁸ What concerned students of HEC, ESCP and HECJF, however, were the high and ever-rising school fees. In March 1965, for example, the organizations of the three schools joined in a common protest "contre l'augmentation des frais annuels d'études qui viennent de passer de 700 à 1200 franc". The decision to do so, ratified by the CCIP on request from the Ministry of Industry, was argued to be the opposite "à toute démocratisation de l'enseignement". Similar protests were arranged in the early 1970s too, clearly inspired by the events of May 68. (*Le Figaro*, 25 mars 1965, ACCIP, 2 Mi 185: Procès-verbaux des séances de l'assemblée générale, 14.01. – 9.12.1971).

⁴²⁹ Sowerwine, Charles (2001): 344 – 345.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.: 352. For more on the student movement within elite education and HEC in particular, see Marc Nouschi (1985).

events, Edgar Faure, the Minister of Education, did a rapid turnaround and answered the students' demand for a more open and democratic university structure. By initiating an immense reorganization of French higher education, Faure laid the foundations for what today is known as the "loi Edgar Faure", passed the 12th of November 1968, a law that gave considerably more power and autonomy to the universities, including their students.⁴³¹ Sex-segregated halls of residence were, for example, abolished, and male and female students were lodged in the same houses for the first time.

Even if higher business education was far from the center of attention during the French student revolts, the business schools were indeed affected by Faure's reforms and the preceding attempts to reorganize upper-secondary education, which commenced in the mid-1960s, and thus before May 68 *per se*. The institutions located in the capital were in particular upset. For instance, the entry policies of the "Parisian quartette" (HEC, HECJF, ESCP and ESSEC) were coordinated and increasingly standardized as result of the reorganization. The Ministry of education did allow a certain degree of institutional individuality or personality, but all schools had, for example, to install what was called second year admission. HEC had been already practicing the *concours d'entrée en deuxième année* for several years. In practice, this allowed successful graduates from the universities (*licence*) and other elite schools to undertake a special exam in order to start directly on the second year.⁴³² However, the places available for this kind of entrance were highly constrained. The second-year *concours* was commonly perceived as the "back-door" into the business-school fraternity, a reputation willingly reproduced by the majority – who had all been accepted on the basis of "first-year examinations". Thus, entering HEC through the second-year *concours* was for many considered to be almost like cheating. As late as in 1977, this opinion was exaggerated in the newsletter *Hommes et Commerce* with a picture of a boy jumping on a train that had already started moving, transporting the brightest "first-year" students.⁴³³

The reorganization of French higher education in the late 1960s, and especially with the opening of Dauphine in 1968, made second-year entry compulsory for all

⁴³¹ Prost, Antoine (1981).

⁴³² *Revue de l'association des élèves HEC. Nouvelle série* (No. 2, mai 1966): 5 – 7.

⁴³³ *Hommes et Commerce*, No. 154, 1977: 66.

providers of higher business education. In practice, this forced the schools not practicing the rule to do so. Among the ones having to change habits, after this “*décision ministérielle*”, were both ESCP and HECJF in addition to the regional business schools.⁴³⁴

A second effect of the reforming climate of the latter part of the 1960s, which culminated with Faure’s reforms in 1968, concerned the students’ disciplinary background from high school and their *prepa*.⁴³⁵ Students competing and succeeding for a place in one of the Parisian business schools in the late 1960s were the so-called “good” or even “excellent” pupils. In line with the French tradition of higher learning at this point in time, these characteristics meant that they were good in mathematics and other forms of abstraction, as has already been elaborated. The majority of students had therefore obtained a *bac* in mathematics and physics, i.e. a *bac C* (from 1965), due to a growing emphasis on mathematics during the *concours*. As was seen earlier, this had not always been the case. Until the 1930s, the majority of HEC’s students had a literary *bac*, but science and mathematics were later to take the place of the humanities and the classics. By the mid-1960s, only the girls preparing for HECJF had a *bac* in the humanities, since the *concours* at this institution practiced an examination in mathematics at a lower level than HEC.⁴³⁶

However in 1968, this sex-specific practice also came to an end.⁴³⁷ From this moment onwards, girls were to have the same preparation and examination as the boys, a ministerial decision stated, which was repeated in the *HECJF Bulletin* in June 1968:

[La] direction des enseignements supérieurs s’oriente vers la création de classes préparatoires communes aux grandes écoles de haut enseignement commercial (HEC, HECJF, ESCEA, ESSEC) formule qui implique une harmonisation des programmes.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 224, 1968): 27. To what extent ESSEC had practiced this *concours* before 1968 is not clear to me.

⁴³⁵ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 224, 1968): 30.

⁴³⁶ The academic year 1966/67 the students entering HECJF had the following *bac*: 63 *bac philo*, 33 *bac math*, 27 *bac sciences expérimentales*, 3 *bac technique et économie*, 2 *bac étranger* (*HECJF Bulletin*, No. 217, 1966: 34).

⁴³⁷ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 227, 1968): 15. The academic year 1970/1971 the students entering HECJF had the following background: 60 *bac C* (mathematics and physics), 44 *bac D* (science experimental), 8 *bac B* (economy), 1 *bac A* (Philosophy) (*HECJF Bulletin*, 223, 1970: 24).

⁴³⁸ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 224, 1968): 30.

The director of HECJF was strongly in favor of the reform. In 1967, about ¼ of the students being selected for HECJF had prepared for higher business studies together with boys. Most of these students were not from Paris, but from the provinces. Mixed preparatory classes emerged considerably earlier outside the larger cities like Paris, Lyon etc. Single-sex education hence was a question of location, resources and social standing too, and not only of ideas and values on manhood and womanhood, masculinity and femininity.⁴³⁹ Since the late-nineteenth century, coeducation had been practiced in schools designated to be of the “people”, of which most were located in smaller and less wealthy towns and parishes.⁴⁴⁰ In the 1960s, in contrast, the French Ministry of Education presented mixed classes as the new regime in lower and middle-level education.

Equality in chances was therefore emphasized, in education as in the workforce, whereas single-sex schooling was found to be out of date. It took, on the other hand, some more years before this system arrived in upper-secondary and higher professional learning.⁴⁴¹ Old prestigious *lycées* and elite schools waited until the early 1970s to announce mixed classes, yet the political, social and cultural foundations for coeducation had been set out in the “radical decade” of the 1960s. In line with a ministerial circular dated the 1st of August 1968, the Minister of Education recommended “d’ouvrir à tous les candidats, garçons et filles, aux concours des écoles d’enseignement supérieur commercial”.⁴⁴² *La mixité* had, in other words, arrived. The remaining question was, what to do with HECJF? Was this school to introduce mixed classes too, and if so; who would voluntarily apply for a *female* business school besides the girls? This is the question we shall turn to in the next – and last – chapter on France.

⁴³⁹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 224, 1968): 30, *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 227, 1969): 15 – 16.

⁴⁴⁰ Lelièvre, Françoise et Claude Lelièvre (1991): 172.

⁴⁴¹ In 1963, mixed classes were set as the normal regime in lower secondary education, and two years later the law of coeducation entailed primary education (only mandated to new institutions). Yet it was not until the application of the law “Haby” (of the 11th of July 1975) ratified the 28th of December 1976, that coeducation was made compulsory at all levels of French education, from “maternelles” to institutions of higher learning. See Françoise & Claude Lelièvre (1991), especially page: 174 – 175.

⁴⁴² *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 227, 1969): 15, *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (29.8.1968), *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 241, 1972): 46.

Concluding Remarks

The French business schools underwent major changes in the 1960s and early-1970s, following the American model of graduate business studies. The HEC, and its formal owner the CCIP, without doubt led this renewal, but its female analogue was also affected by the introduction of the “new paradigm”. Throughout the 1960s, management studies replaced the old commercial “sciences” in both places, even though the educational reform seemed more radical in respect to the male business school. While HECJF remained located in the center of Paris, illustrating continuity with past practices and traditions, HEC broke radically with its nineteenth-century legacy when it moved out of the capital in 1964. It was reestablished at the countryside campus of Jouy-en-Josas, and came to be run by a team of full-time academics, trained mainly in the US. By this, HEC was, so to speak, reborn under the influence of the “American model”, combining the teaching of future business managers with research and consultancy in management and other subjects in these fields.

HEC's fresh effort to make management an academic branch of learning was the first of its kind in France and the only one before the French State decided to build a management university in 1966. The opening of Paris-Dauphine, devoted to business studies, in 1968 represented thus a new phase in the history of French business – or management – education, a phase where the authorities took considerably more interest in the field, believing it was crucial for the competitiveness of the French economy. The creation of a national foundation for management studies, the FNEGE, also reiterated this. For the CCIP, increasing state action in the field of management education and training involved further competition, but also institutional pressure to introduce new policies and practices such as coeducation. As French universities had long been open to women, Paris-Dauphine had no barriers keeping female candidates out. This made the American model accessible for women too, while in Norway it was reserved for those who were already managers, most of whom were of course men. This excluded most of the female business graduates from getting the new knowledge within the Norwegian field of business administration. In fact, the only women to get the new ideas from the US in postwar Norway were those attending the secretarial schools, but then only in the sense of extra hours in typewriting and stenography, and thus resulting in nothing more than

strained arms and necks. For the graduates of HECJF, it was different. Through its position within the French system of elite education, a HECJF graduate had access to this new knowledge as easily as any male business graduate.

But not everyone was in favor of the modernization that took place under the banner of the American business-school prototype.

The *anciens élèves* felt increasingly uneasy with the bold “Americanization” of the French *écoles de commerce*. Offended, as much as threatened, by the pace of the transformation, the *anciens* did everything they could to stop the ongoing expansion. Due to the strong bonds between the Parisian Chamber of commerce and the *anciens* the attempt to “Americanize” the Chamber’s three business schools was successfully stopped in 1967/68. This maintained the institutional position of the Parisian business schools, and the “American model” was adjusted to prevailing French *élitism*, which placed selection before the question of knowledge production. For this reason, the two-sex model of higher business education continued – supported by the enduring male business culture. Still, the French field of higher business education became considerably less linked to gender after the “American challenge”. The adoption of management as a core discipline had given the business schools more strings to their bows than selectivity and masculinity. This reduced the importance of gender as a source of power and worth within the field of higher business education. This is not to say that managerial responsibilities stopped being attached to the male sex. French business organizations were still operating within a patriarchal culture, wherein the idea of female senior managers was difficult to accept.

The roundtable discussion on women and management, held by the community of the four Parisian business schools in 1970, depicts convincingly the male and masculine ethos of the business community. According to the male debaters, women were the only ones being “delayed” or caught up by their gender when trying to climb the managerial ladder. Gender was, in other words, the sole explanation of the career differences between male and female *cadres*. This displays that the professionalization of management in no way erased – or outdated – gender as an organizing principle of the business firm, even though the female graduates stressed their own managerial competence and thus equality with men. One explanation here is, of course, that the

managerial paradigm was made by and for men. Subsequently, it reproduced men's power over women in the business firm. Yet the example also illustrated that gender – operating as inequality – continued to mark the so-called modern and functional economy, even though new ideas on how to run a business firm were about to emerge.

This chapter still argues that the importation of the “American model” made schools like HEC rely less on gender, and in particular maleness, as an institutional asset. Whereas the old educational paradigm of *culture générale* tied business leadership to the nineteenth-century notion of the cultivated man, as a supplement to family bonds and heritage, the “new paradigm” freed management so to speak from the male sex – by simply accentuating it as a codified knowledge. By defining “the nature of managerial work”, to borrow the title of Herny Mintzberg's book, managerial responsibilities were not longer embedded in the man and his authority. On the contrary, it was his expertise and role as manager that counted. Hence, the essential thing was no longer the director himself, but what he represented in terms of competence and skills. This opened up new space and possibilities for business graduates of the female sex, like those being educated within HECJF – “une ‘business school’ féminine absolument unique au monde...”, as a male business graduate phrased it in 1970. To what extent the school was as highly regarded when the CCIP tried to blend it with the ESCP in 1972 is, however, a different question.

Part Three:

Closing the Gender Gap; 1970s

La libération de la femme a suivi un long processus d'évolution et je crois qu'on peut dire que le cliché de la femme au foyer est déjà historique....

M. Corpet.¹

CHAPTER NINE

La Mixité Arrives in Paris: The Abolition of 'Difference'

The question of gender equality in higher business education, and its impact on École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Fille (HECJF), was vigorously debated in Paris in the early 1970s. While few students and alumni members opposed the attempts to harmonize the admission rules for the Parisian business schools, many were against the principle of coeducation (*la mixité*).² The plan of the CCIP to merge the female business school with the male École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP), was in particular opposed. In the words of HECJF's former director, Yvette Méniszez, the whole story was disturbing or *perturbant*. During our meeting in Paris a few years ago, she said the following: "Mlle Larsen, for you HECJF is history, but for me it was more like poetry, though the end of the story was everything but nice. It was disturbing!"³ Why did she use these strong words?

¹ ACCIP, 2 MI 185: *Procès-verbaux des séances de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 24 juin 1971: 291.

² *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 94, 1967): 123. For the *anciens*, the coordination was a way to offset the rising competition within the area of higher education in general, and business schooling in particular. Even though the *grande école* enrolment was closely watched and regulated, the field of higher business education had expanded rapidly. Since only 1960 the country had got as many as ten new (and mostly private) business schools, as well as one management university. See Antoine Prost (1981): 394, Table 10.7 and Appendix A7/Table II.

³ Interview with Mme Yvette Méniszez, Café de la Paix, Paris, 30.03.2000.

The French sociologist Frédérique Pigeyre, so far the only one to study the introduction of coeducation in the business schools of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, argues that *la mixité* became a political tool in the hands of the CCIP.⁴ The Ministry's decision to make all business schools accessible for girls, was thus viewed as an occasion to work through concerns and interests other than gender equality *per se*, such as downsizing, cost curbing and new educational projects. A second point of Pigeyre's concerns HECJF's conservative or old-fashion character. This explained, according to her, the abolishment of the school in 1975. "Paradoxalement, après avoir été considérée dans les années 1920 comme une innovation, HECJF faisait figure, environ cinquante ans plus tard, d'institution dépassée et conservatrice."⁵

In the words of Pigeyre, the management of HECJF showed no sign or wish to integrate into to the "universe of men" in the early 1970s.⁶ However, there are reasons to question the reliability of this interpretation. The school had displayed a strong ability to adjust to new and changing conditions before, not least during the 1930s and the 1960s. Hence, the current chapter aims at shedding some new light on the historical circumstances that resulted in the final closure of HECJF, which institutionally and discursively represented the end of the two-sex model in Paris. It does so by exploring the meaning of "gender equality" in the debate on coeducation within and amongst the CCIP and its respective business schools and councils. This debate, starting out in the late 1960s, resulted in the decision to open HEC for female applicants from the beginning of the academic year 1973/74.⁷ In September the same year, 26 girls crossed the threshold of the school's campus at Jouy-en-Josas.⁸ Two years later the number had climbed to 69,

⁴ Pigeyre, Frédérique (1986): 120 – 122. According to Françoise Lelièvre, historian of female education, coeducation was historically a result of weak economy and recruitment problems. Those institutions practicing it first were therefore small and poor, and most often located in the provinces. She writes: "Dans les années qui suivent la Grande Guerre, la 'coéducation' apprit de plus comme une solution aux difficultés de recrutement, d'équilibre financier et de gestion du personnel des petits établissements" (Françoise & Claude Lelièvre, 1991: 172).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Pigeyre refers here to an article written by a HECJF-graduate in *Le Monde* (19.06.1970), and cited in *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 233, 1970): 1. In the article, the HECJF-woman argues as follows: "[Le] principales responsables d'HECJF ne semblent pas pressées d'intégrer cette école dans l'univers des hommes...cette position ségrégationniste faire d'HECJF à long terme un établissement de second zone."

⁷ ESSEC introduced mixed classes one year ahead: 1972/73. See Valérie Languille (1995); (1997), and Appendix 3, Table II.

⁸ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 135, janvier – février 1973): 54.

and at the beginning of a new decade – in 1980 – the girls represented 32% of the new students at HEC.⁹ Coeducation had, in other words, led to what everybody had previously feared – a mass entry of women.

The CCIP Debates Coeducation

The question of coeducation preoccupied the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) ever more in the 1960s.¹⁰ The sensitive topic had a tendency to turn up in particular when the business schools' financial situation was debated. According to an educational report from 1968, all schools showed a major deficit, and the fees far from covered the real costs of each student; "Les frais de scolarité ne couvent qu'une faible partie du coût de chaque élève..."¹¹ Having three separate institutions fulfilling more or less the same function was not exactly economical. To a great extent, HEC, HECJF and ESCP did the same job by educating managers for the business world, though the wordings of their objectives were slightly different. From the record of the CCIP, ESCP's official goal was to train future directors and "cadres supérieurs commerciaux administratifs et financiers des entreprises...", whereas HEC was created to "donner aux entreprises des cadres supérieures de haut niveau". HECJF, on the other hand, accomplished the functions of both; i.e. "formation de cadres supérieurs, employés comparables à ceux assurés par HEC et ESCP...". All the same, these fine distinctions could no longer justify having three separate bodies, the report claimed. Hence, reorganization was needed if the Chamber wanted to allocate its resources in a better way.

Les regroupements doivent tender soit à des fusions lorsque les similitudes de recrutement de programme et de débouchés ne justifient plus les distinctions (c'est le cas d'HEC, Sup de Co [ESCP] et très probablement à terme d'HECJF), soit à une étroite coordination comme ce pourrait

⁹ *Hommes et commerce* (No. 184, 1984): 54, *Hermès* (No. 41, 1973): XVI. See also Table I in Chapter 1. About 35% of the incoming students the same year in the ESCP and ESSEC were female.

¹⁰ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 241, 1972): "Allocution de M. Arrighi de Casanova": 38. According to a discourse held by the General Director of the CCIP, de Casanova, in 1972 to the members of HECJF alumni, the issue of coeducation had been "posée depuis longtemps". He continues: "je me souviens l'avoir évoquée il y a quatre ou cinq ans avec Mme Gilliot [président of HECJF's alumni] qui, à l'époque m'avait, avec beaucoup d'habileté, convaincu que le problème n'était pas mûr".

¹¹ ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): *Rapport d'orientation de l'œuvre d'enseignement de la Chambre de commerce et l'industrie de Paris* (1968): 34.

être le cas pour la deuxième et troisièmes cycles qui seront installés côte à côte et seront étroitement solidaires pas les programmes et la pédagogie.¹²

The plan for institutional reorganization consisted of two separate moves: first the Chamber wanted to relocate the ESCP and HECJF geographically to Jouy-en-Josas, and to create one undergraduate (second-cycle) institution for business education, on the basis of the resources of the three schools it was to replace. On top of that, the report projected a “new HEC”, organized as an American-type graduate school. By preparing researchers and scholars in management and neighboring disciplines, this school was to accomplish the former on a higher level, while simultaneously enabling the Chamber to reduce the number of institutions from three to two.¹³ However, those who drew up the report acknowledged that a fusion between HECJF and ESCP was a long-term project, in need for a “préparation psychologique suffisant”.¹⁴ Evidently, the male – female split was thought of as a psychological barrier that was difficult to transform institutionally. In spite of that, the proposal seemed achievable, the report concluded, at least if one prepared it carefully. Yet, after three years, the project had not made any noteworthy advances, and the debate continued for two additional years.

“Il n’est pas dans mes intentions de justifier la mixité de l’enseignement”, the president of CCIP’s educational committee, Monsieur Corpet, approved when opening the discussion on *la mixité* in June 1971. “La libération de la femme a suivi un long processus d’évolution”, he commenced, and “...je crois qu’on peut dire que le cliché de la femme au foyer est déjà historique”.¹⁵ But in spite of this self-assured statement, Corpet soon began to justify his own discourse by pointing at the practices of gender equality within the field of higher business education. Boys and girls, he sustained, already followed the same *école prepa*, whereas the *concours* in fact had the same level

¹² Ibid.

¹³ It is a bit unclear though, whether the relocation of HECJF to Jouy-en-Josas was part of the Chamber’s plan when deciding to create ISA in 1967. According to my sources the fusion is mentioned in 1968 for the first time. But, Françoise Clerget, the president of the HECJF association, argues in 1971 that HECJF was included in the initial plans, presented for the first time in 1966/67. See Chapter 7 (*HECJF Bulletin*, No. 237, 1971: 5).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ ACCIP, 2 MI 185: *Procès-verbaux des séances de l’assemblée générale*, Séance 24 juin 1971: 291.

of difficulty at HECJF as at HEC – hence “la selection y est comparable”.¹⁶ Moreover, the business enterprises were as fond of the boys as the girls.¹⁷ Allowing female candidates to apply for the male business schools would, therefore, be the only reasonable thing to do, at least if the aim was to further encourage the promotion of female managers. A solution of this kind would consequently force the female branch of HEC to close down, because it would, in his opinion, be ridiculous to maintain it.¹⁸ Still, to get rid of Sanua’s female business school was easier said than done.

With a history going back to 1916, the school had been an unambiguous success; something the CCIP had no difficulty admitting. With the work of Mme Méniszez, it had managed to become a true equivalent to HEC, Corpet said. The irony of this achievement was nonetheless that it also justified its abolishment; if women got access to the male schools it would simply not be needed anymore.

Il est paradoxal que la suppression de cette école apparaisse comme la rançon de son succès. C’est parce que sa directrice, Mme Méniszez, et toute l’équipe qu’elle anime en ont fait l’égale d’HEC que cette suppression peut être envisagée.¹⁹

For Corpet, gender equality apparently meant to integrate the female candidates into the “world of men”. Still, he did recognize that the closure of the female business school might be considered as a loss, especially for those students who were about to prepare for the entry exams for the forthcoming year. For this reason he suggested to offer them all a HEC-diploma – as a sort of compensation for “lost opportunities” to be considered equal with men. What explained this generous offer?

First Volleys

The president of the CCIP, Monsieur Laubard, initially wanted to get rid of HECJF as soon as possible.²⁰ But in March 1971, before Corpet’s discourse in the General Assembly, the Chamber had accepted Yvette Méniszez’ request to conduct a more

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.: 292.

¹⁹ Ibid.: 293.

²⁰ ACCIP, 32 C 3: *Procès-verbaux, Commission de l’enseignement*, Séance 23 juin 1971: 2.

detailed study on how to approach the issue of coeducation in general, and its impact on HECJF in particular. But when she brought the conclusion forward, at the end of May 1971, with the support of the Ministry of Education, the CCIP held back.²¹ A rapid integration of HECJF's forthcoming students at the campus at Jouy-en-Josas, as her analysis had envisioned, was unworkable in the eyes of the Parisian Chamber simply because it would mean merging the two schools together. Apparently, this was not the intention of the CCIP when it said that the two institutions were "of equal level". The Chamber's main concern with her proposal was, however, the reaction of the students, and their respective families.²² It was claimed that a solution of the kind presented by Méniszez was disrespectful to those who had already been selected. As a matter of fact, it would simply be impossible to put students side by side who had not passed the same *concours*; "les élèves d'HEC risquaient de réagir contre cette injection brutale de 120 élèves non admises par le même concours qu'eux".²³

The educational committee of HEC was consequently faced with the very same problem as before: internal opposition and disagreement, with the result that the whole process stalled once again. Initially, the majority accepted female applicants on the condition that they entered the second year, which would unmistakably mean reserving the status-giving first-year *concours* for the boys. But just before summer 1971, the opinion slowly changed to the advantage of the girls. Corpet's offer in June, to grant the coming students of HECJF a male degree, was therefore presented as a kind of compromise, between the "brutal" feminization of HEC that Méniszez foresaw, and the wish of the president to abolish HECJF immediately. Yvette Méniszez, however, found it hard to accept Corpet's "present".²⁴ From her point of view, the bargain was unacceptable on the premise of what already had been said about the level and success of her school. Subsequently, she started to fight for its continuation regardless of the costs, a behavior that some of the CCIP members found quite touching, yet very difficult to

²¹ Ibid.: 1. Méniszez' argument was that it would be impossible to maintain the enthusiasm for something already condemned. Thus, the only solution was a fast incorporation of the girls at Jouy-en-Josas, which basically meant to merge HECJF with its male counterpart, a conclusion that was supported by the Ministry of Education. "Le Ministère a admis la nécessité de faire vite comprenant combien il est désagréable pour des élèves de se trouver dans une école moribonde."

²² ACCIP, 2 MI 185: *Procès-verbaux des séances de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 24 juin 1971: 293.

²³ ACCIP, 32 C 3: *Procès-verbaux, Commission de l'enseignement*, Séance 23 juin 1971 : 1, 4.

handle. "La dernier commission d'HECJF...a été émouvante...je crois qu'il est bon que tout le monde le sache", a CCIP's representative told the board on July the 8th.²⁵

Pour Mme Méniszez qui est une femme remarquable et comme vous les savez veuve, son école c'est sa vie et elle aime profondément ses filles, et en commission administrative elle n'a pu retenir ses larmes...²⁶

Méniszez was still not the only one protesting. The president of the HECJF-association, Françoise Clerget, was also abundantly clear when she wrote about the incident in the *HECJF Bulletin*.²⁷ The suggestion to launch mixed classes, and therefore closing down the female version of HEC, was in her opinion unacceptable. Actually, it was everything but a true reform, she said. Neither HECJF's staff nor management deferred to the two remaining business schools of the Chamber. And the most valuable aspect of the school was its methodology, the president argued. Already from the start this had been its benchmark, enabling the female graduates to integrate easily into the world of business, and the graduates agreed. Within a few weeks, the association received as many as 2,000 petitions, forwarded by both former students and employers who wanted to express their sympathy with the school and its uncertainties. The graduates also found it very hard to accept the idea that the number of female business graduates could decrease as result of the reorganization. Subsequently, the *anciennes* agreed not to sign anything before ensuring that a minimum of 150 women would graduate from the Parisian business schools each year, and that

leur placement dans des conditions aussi juste que celle des garçons, et le soutien psychologique nécessaire pour affronter un monde qui ne possède ni les mentalités d'accueil, ni les équipements collectifs indispensables. L'expérience de la Suède est, à cet égard, instructive.²⁸

As always, the main concern of the alumni was the conditions under which the female *cadres* worked. Recognizing that the young girls, due to their gender, were still

²⁴ Interview with Mme Yvette Méniszez, Café de la Paix, Paris, 30.03.2000.

²⁵ ACCIP, MI 185: *Procès-verbaux des séances de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 24 juin 1971: 311.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 237, 1971): 5 – 6.

facing problems unknown to most of the boys, it was, according to the president, necessary to take women's gender-specific needs and interests seriously. An interesting fact is that she here mentions Sweden as an example or model of gender equality. Historically, Sweden came to develop a social policy that acknowledged women's gender differences in relation to work and home relatively early, a legacy shaped by Alva Myrdal, among others, from the mid 30s onwards.²⁹ With the emerging feminist movement, parts of the tradition of Myrdal was brought back by a new generation of feminists and social democrats, and formed the basis for what later was to be known as Swedish "state-feminism".³⁰ As we shall see in the coming chapter, similar trends developed in Norway too, combining grass-root activism with feminist politics from "above". What the HECJF alumni, and also some French feminist groups at the same time, had in common with this tradition was the attempt to view gender equality as reconcilable with a political recognition of women's difference from men. In consequence, true gender equality depended on an inclusive recall of "difference", in education as well as in employment. For HECJF this could, for instance, mean recognizing women's need for specific training programs in order to make it into business, something that, according to Mlle Clerget, would lead to true equality between the sexes: "La mixité réelle, dans l'entreprise, comme dans l'encadrement et dans les effectifs des écoles, nous apparaît bien comme un objectif à long terme."³¹

HECJF's attempt to recognize women's specific needs and interest, therefore, does not prove that they were either conservative or "old-fashion" in their approach, as Frédérique Pigeyre wrote in 1986. On the contrary, it confirms a different kind of feminism than the equality-oriented approach that was gaining ground within the "women's policy machinery" of the French State, to quote Amy Mazur.³² According to her extensive studies of French gender-equality policies in the 60s and 70s, new ideas of the feminist movement were poorly integrated into French state-feminism, due to the strength of its Jacobin political culture, which demanded social change through an active

²⁸ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 233, 1970): 1.

²⁹ Élgan, Elisabeth (1994): 162 – 163.

³⁰ Bergqvist, Christina et al (eds. 1999): 147, Hernes, Helga (1987), Holst, Cathrine (2002): 60.

³¹ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 233, 1970): 1.

³² Mazur, Amy (1995b): 85, 91.

state, not organized interests and society-based demands.³³ The organizational landscape, in which the new-wave feminists belonged, showed little faith however in mainstream politics, and its so-called patriarchal underpinnings.³⁴ These facts taken together helped to minimize the role of organized feminism, on the one hand, and female communities like the HECJF-alumni, on the other, in the equality-driven politicization, and later institutionalization, of women's issues in France. The view and notion of gender as "difference" was consequently marginalized, or even "voluntarily" kept away from what the neo-feminists viewed as patriarchal constructions like the state, to the advantage of a feminist politics in accordance with the strategies of the governing parties.

There was, nonetheless, a general agreement that gender equality depended on equal rights and opportunities for men and women in areas like higher education and work. Disagreements between the political "establishment" and networks of "new" and "old" feminist-minded women were thus first of all related to *how* this equality was to be achieved. The debate on coeducation, which took place within the confines of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, exemplifies this inherent tension between the politics of "equality" and "difference" in a captivating way. In addition, it shows the difficulties French women faced in terms of being respected as political actors vis-à-vis men. As we shall see, Mme Méniszez' had good reasons for being furious about the ways in which the Chamber of commerce handled both her as a director of the HECJF, and her female allies within the administrative corpus of the CCIP. We have to go back now to the autumn 1971, to track the debate on coeducation further.

³³ Ibid. According to Amy Mazur, equal employment and pay for women were the two most important feminist policy demands in early-1970s' France. Several conferences devoted women's status and employment were organized in these years, and apart from the demands for legalizing abortion, these actions were among the most successful ones in terms of policy implications. An Equal Pay Law was passed by the French parliament in 1972, and one year later, it ratified an Equal Treatment Law. Abortion was made legal in France in 1974 (Amy Mazur 1995: 71 – 72, Dorothy McBride Stetson 1987: 60 – 67)

³⁴ The Movement de Libération des Femmes (MLF) came into being in 1970. Like the US movement, the MLF staked out its position in oppositions not only against traditional, conservative Right, but also the "old" Marxists and Marxists-Leninist Left and to liberals, including those feminists who played by the rules of the established liberal state. It was both "structureless" and "leaderless", arguing that formal hierarchies and structures were patriarchal constructions, and thus evidence of male domination. For more on the characteristics of the French feminist movement, see Claire Goldberg Moses (1998).

Second thoughts

Even though nobody had opposed the principle of mixed classes officially, there were major doubts and disagreements within the CCIP about the procedures regarding female admission to the male business schools. Especially amongst the members of the HEC-committee, the principle of *la mixité* had been hotly debated. The final voting in the General Assembly had therefore been rescheduled to October, with the unavoidable consequence that the date for coeducation was postponed for at least another year. But when the representatives met again, in February 1972, they managed to speak with a singular voice.³⁵ Both HEC and its "little-brother", the École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP), were now ready to accept female students, the president declared, and the principle of coeducation was to be introduced as from the coming academic year. However, the press release issued for the occasion had an additional surprise; HECJF was not completely abolished, but coordinated, administratively and pedagogically, with the Chamber's second business school – the ESCP.³⁶ The new establishment, which still had no official name, was to be located in Paris together with a management training foundation and a center for continuing education. All together, the three programs were to be integrated into a new "Centre Parisien de Management", the inner city's counterpart to the campus at Jouy-en-Josas.³⁷

At first, this decision met with few negative remarks. The female community of the HECJF viewed it almost like a victory, proving that the CCIP finally had come to value the school and its pedagogical expertise.³⁸ Still, there were many loose ends. Hence, a working group was established to facilitate the process, the first initiative of which was to sound out the business community about its view on the merger. But, when the committee found out that nobody opposed it, it proceeded on with the work.³⁹ The

³⁵ ACCIP, 2 MI 187 – 223: *Procès-Verbaux des séances de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 3 février 1972, HECJF Bulletin (No. 239, 1972): 3.

³⁶ ACCIP, *Communiqué de Presse* (10.02.1972).

³⁷ As a matter of fact, continuing-education programs had began mushrooming in France at this time, as it was made clear that a new law was underway, forcing all enterprises to spend one percent of their earnings on prolonged education of their employees; i.e. *Taxe d'apprentissage*. This law passed the Senate in July 1971.

³⁸ Interview with Mme Yvette Ménisiez, Café de la Paix, Paris, 30.03.2000.

³⁹ ACCIP, 43 C 2: *Procès-verbaux la commission administrative de l'Ecole de haut enseignement commercial pour les jeunes filles*, réunion 12 avril 1972, 32 C 3: *Procès-verbaux de la Commission de*

only thing worrying them was the impression that the firms were not really concerned with the business schools' teaching and educational quality. In contrast, they endorsed a very traditional attitude "qui tend à donner la priorité à la qualité du recrutement (c'est à dire le sélection opéré par les concours) sur la qualité de l'enseignement..."⁴⁰ In short, the business enterprises seemed primarily concerned with the selection, believing that the quality of the graduates corresponded to the level of the *concours* and not the actual training provided by the business schools. For the CCIP, this answer was, in many ways, devastating because it had put considerable resources into modernizing its educational programs.

However, the original plan to merge HECJF with the ESCP was maintained, and the next item on the agenda was to inform the two alumni associations involved. The general director of the CCIP, Monsieur Arrighi de Casanova himself, did this.⁴¹ The first meeting took place on March the 4th, at the ESCP in boulevard République, whereas the second was held at HECJF's General Assembly on May the 30th.

A closer look at the two speeches given by Arrighi de Casanova displays the major differences in terms of the tactics he employed. Apart from the fact that the two audiences were poles apart, the question of coeducation had quite a different meaning for the schools. Whereas HECJF had been running the risk of being abolished, this was had never been an issue for the male graduates of the ESCP. Even though it was not the most famous business school in France, it was obviously the oldest – and thus well known among the country's businessmen. As noted in Chapter 8, the ESCP also regained much of its lost autonomy in 1969 – when it managed to free itself from the regional "Sup-de-Co"-network. This enabled them, one year later, to hold a national entry-examination of the kind arranged by the Chamber's two other business schools, underscoring an explicit ambition to advance from a regional to a nationwide business school. This thirst for "revenge" caused major problems for the CCIP when it broached the issue of coeducation. Monsieur Arrighi de Casanova employed therefore a relatively tough, but fair, tone when he approached the audience in boulevard République. He commenced his

l'enseignement, séance 28 avril 1972, 42 C 2: *Procès-verbaux de la Commission administrative d'ESCP*, séance 20 avril 1972.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 32 C 3.

⁴¹ *Hermès* (No. 32, 1972): IV – V, *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 241, 1972).

speech by saying that their job was of great importance but that the alumni never could replace the school's formal direction. To copy the standard of the Chamber's "crown jewel", i.e. the HEC, was henceforth worthless. Moreover, there was no reason to work against the principle of coeducation. "Il est aujourd'hui pose qu'on le veuille ou non", and it was certainly not the time, he continued, to make the Parisian Chamber of Commerce stand forward as a conservative and reactionary institution.⁴² The state-owned École Polytechnique (X) had already taken this crucial step, he said. So had the Paris-based École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (ESSEC), which had been previously run by Catholics. To oppose this project would therefore be unwise, Arrighi de Casanova concluded.

Ce n'est pas au moment où Polytechnique, école militaire s'il en fut, décréter la mixité, au moment où d'autres établissements plus comparables aux nôtres, comme l'ESSEC, décrètent également la mixité, que la Chambre de Commerce doit faire figure de personne rétrograde en refusant de rechercher si la mixité ne doit pas également être introduite dans ses propres établissements.⁴³

When talking to the female business graduates, the general director showed a completely different attitude, however.⁴⁴ In contrast to the séance in front of the men, he suddenly became humble, if not sorry about the current situation. That the school had become a major success was evident, he said, and it was this success that in many ways made the question of mixed classes so difficult to handle. HECJF was without doubt a school "qui s'est hissé au niveau d'HEC, au niveau de l'ESCP". In fact, the level of the education given, and the posts for which it qualified its graduates meant that it could no longer be separated from the male schools, he said.⁴⁵ Moreover, the principle of coeducation was breaking through everywhere making it impossible to remain within the old "dual" structure. *La mixité*, he said,

⁴² *Hermès* (No. 32, 1972): IV.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 241, 1972): 37 – 48.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 38.

[E]lle pénètre partout, au niveau de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur où elle a déjà droit de cite depuis longtemps dans les facultés, dans les universités; et voilà qu'aujourd'hui elle pénètre, dans les grandes écoles, et Dieu sait comment elle y pénètre, puisque même les écoles militaires comme l'Ecole polytechnique...⁴⁶

The procedure for coeducation was still open to question, but the general director foresaw three different options. The first of these, which was to abolish HECJF as result of the introduction of coeducation at HEC and ESCP, was the easiest but also the most radical solution, he said. This strategy was no longer a real choice, due to the fact that the *anciennes*, led by Mlle Clerget, had made the CCIP aware of HECJF's intellectual and professional qualities the previous year. "Je voudrais ici dire que votre association a grandement contribué à faire réfléchir sur cette question et aussi à faire évoluer un certain nombre de partisans de cette solution."⁴⁷ A second possibility would be to open the female business school for boys, but as everybody knew, this was easier said than done. Unfortunately, they all operated in a psychological and a sociological environment where the idea of *la mixité* in a boys' school was completely normal, but the opposite was simply impossible. Of course, he himself had difficulties accepting this, Arrighi de Casanova continued, but it was at least better to be realistic and pragmatic rather than to initiate something that never would work out. And it was for this reason too, that the CCIP had come up with a third – and final – solution: to merge the HECJF with the ESCP, pedagogically and administratively, with the aim of making it the focal point of a new "Centre Parisien de Management". However, neither of the two schools' profiles was to be continued.

Besides having a more applied syllabi, the CCIP foresaw the new institution as an international or European school, based on a trilingual training program in combination with internships abroad. Additionally, the committee insisted on practicing a more diversified recruitment strategy. As an alternative to the traditional emphasis on selectivity, the students' interests, personalities and devotion to work in an international setting were to be given weight, and that such a strategy favored girls and boys equally was, in Arrighi de Casanova's words, evident: "[L]es jeunes filles sont beaucoup mieux

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 39.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

taillées intellectuellement pour passer des concours que les garçons.”⁴⁸ Consequently, women’s chances would be as good as men’s in relation to schooling and work, which according to him was the best outcome of the dispute, as it provided women with equal chances to enter higher managerial work, and not only with equal rights to accomplish a degree.

*Je pense également que cette expérience de mixité que nous allons vivre sera quelque chose d’exemplaire et offrira aux femmes une égalité de chances non seulement pour réussir des concours et obtenir des diplômes, mais aussi pour accéder aux plus hautes responsabilités des affaires.*⁴⁹

Round Three

After the alumni associations were informed, the Chamber’s commission on coeducation kept on working, yet the challenges were many. The question of identification in particular caused the Chamber pain: Was the new school to keep the old acronyms, or was a new title preferable? As far as one can tell from the sources available, the opinions were many and contradictory. In order to avoid additional problems, the CCIP hired the media agency, SOFRES, with the objective of finding a reasonable and neutral solution. And in the beginning of November 1972, the conclusion was presented.⁵⁰ The new business school, resulting from a merger between the ESCP and the HECJF, was to be named École des Affaires de Paris (EAP), which meant that neither of the old acronyms would be maintained. Unmistakably, the line of reasoning was “a new name for a new product”, although the most common way of resolving such problems is usually to maintain both acronyms for a certain period – until the new name was integrated and known.⁵¹ But in relation to the EAP, this latter strategy, mostly used by large business companies, was too risky. To assimilate a male institution with a female school was in most eyes, except Mme Méniszez and her community, the same as combining a symbolic superior with a symbolic inferior. Thus, the CCIP agreed to accept the new name,

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 45.

⁴⁹ Ibid.: 44.

⁵⁰ ACCIP, 2 Mi 187 – 230: *Procès-verbaux de l’assemblée générale*, Séance 7 novembre 1972 (as the page numbers are invisible on my copies of this séance, I follow my own paging system in relation to this source).

presented by SOFRES.⁵² The time was finally ready, the general director said, to “terminer avec la guerre des sigles afin de permettre de lancer le plus rapidement possible ce nouvel établissement sous une nouvelle appellation”.⁵³

But despite this agreement, a general mistrust soon developed both within and between the Chamber and its associates.⁵⁴ 10 of the 45 representatives in the General Assembly abstained from the final vote on the acronym “EAP”. In other words, not everybody was convinced that the new project – and name – was the wisest solution to “la guerre des sigles”. The *anciens* of the ESCP, some of whom took part in the General Assembly, felt in particular offended by the result. To get rid of the acronym “ESCP” was, in their opinion, not the same as doing away with the name “HECJF”. One of them went as far as to indicate that the whole plan was the largest mistake that could ever be made.⁵⁵ To wipe out a name that had existed for more than 150 years could in no way be justified by replacing it with the new “EAP”.

Je pense qu'il est très grave d'enlever le sigle d'une école; ce sigle ESCP existe depuis cent cinquante ans et c'est une très lourde responsabilité pour la Chambre de l'enlever et de donner une autre dénomination; EAP. Je n'aime pas de tout ce terme d'“affaires”.⁵⁶

The general director soon interrupted the debate. Launching the new school under the name EAP was not as outrageous as the man believed, he stated. In point of fact, similar names already existed, like the Centre de Préparation des Affaires (CPA) and Institut Supérieure des Affaires (ISA). But his effort to calm down the opposition had little effect. Soon after the announcement was made, students and *anciens* began mobilizing against the CCIP. And the young male students found themselves particularly angry at the ways in which the conservative newspaper *Le Figaro* covered the happening.⁵⁷ “Le premier article de M. Gambiez dans le ‘Figaro’ du 24 novembre a suscité des réactions très vive

⁵¹ Ibid.: 5.

⁵² Ibid.: 9.

⁵³ Ibid.: 4

⁵⁴ The result of the voting was; 31 for and 4 against.

⁵⁵ ACCIP, 2 Mi 187 – 230: *Procès-verbaux de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 7 novembre 1972: 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

parmi les élèves, surtout en 3ème année”, the school’s own commission stated a few weeks later. Why was there this anger against the decision of the CCIP?

After reading and comparing the various articles covering the Chamber’s new plan, it’s evident that the commentary written by Gambiez was the most critical of all. He questioned for instance how the CCIP was going to handle the fact that the capacity within higher business studies would be reduced by 60 places in the Paris area, as a result of the fusion of the ESCP and the HECJF. In other words, he expressed the same concern as the alumni of HECJF had done a year earlier, though for the male business candidates this was probably not the most ominous aspect of the article. More threatening or intimidating was probably the part in which Gambiez recognized the female business school as being more important in modeling the new establishment than the ESCP. According to his article, the program’s first year was inspired directly by the methodology developed by the HECJF, combining business theory and practice in an original way: “Ce programme suivra notamment l’enseignement méthodologique qui constituait l’une des originalités d’HECJF.”⁵⁸ For the ESCP-community, which had been trying to create a rivalry with HEC, this statement must have been devastating. And when the same article, in addition, declared that the *concours* for EAP was to be less compelling than that at Jouy-en-Josas, in the sense that “les maths étant un peu moins importantes”, the students protested, and apparently their complaints were taken into account.⁵⁹ The CCIP responded immediately by holding a press conference, in which they stressed the superior level of the ESCP, thinking that that would stabilize the situation. But again they were wrong.⁶⁰

At the end of December 1972, the ESCP community got a new board which was ready to fight the decision of the CCIP. And after Christmas, the newly-appointed president – Monsieur Bordat – made his first approach to the representatives, asking for the name to be changed back to *their* old acronym; i.e. ESCP. The Chamber refused, but

⁵⁷ *Le Monde* (25 novembre, 1972): 13, *Le Figaro* (24 novembre 1972): “Epreuve ‘sans programme’ de M. Gambiez, ACCIP, 42 C 3: *Procès-verbaux de la Commission Administrative d’ESCP*, Séance 14 décembre 1972: 1.

⁵⁸ *Le Figaro* (24 novembre 1972): “Epreuve ‘sans programme’ de M. Gambiez,

⁵⁹ ACCIP, 42 C 3: *Procès-verbaux de la Commission Administrative d’ESCP*, Séance 14 décembre 1972: 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid.: 2, *Communiqué* (30 novembre 1972) cited in *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 242, 1972), BNF: *Le Figaro* (1 décembre 1972): 4, *Les Echos* (1 décembre 1972), *Le Monde* (9 décembre 1972).

the *anciens* had no intention giving up the fight for their honor.⁶¹ Their second try was to propose a referendum, which would be established in cooperation with the Students' Bureau, but again this was turned down by the CCIP. The official reply given by the Chamber was that they were well aware of the community's opinion, but this was still not enough to change the course of the process. However, at the following General Assembly, held the 5th of February, it becomes clear that this denial was far from absolute. In fact, the Chamber's president himself, Monsieur Laubard, seemed to have changed his mind, asking how it could be that the school's demands were not taken into account by the General Assembly. He said: "Alors je me suis posé la question: est-ce qu'il est possible que la Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris ne puisse tenir aucun compte de ces réactions?"⁶²

As the debate proceeded it became apparent that Laubard had had several meetings with Bordat to discuss the conflict. The president showed his strong sympathies with the male graduates of the ESCP. "Il faut reconnaître que les anciens élèves sont une partie prenante dans le devenir de cette école, les diplômés qu'ils ont obtenu constituent pour eux un capital..."⁶³ As a way out of the disagreement, he had therefore agreed, without consulting his representatives, to add an "S" to the acronym "EAP". His main explanation for this obstinate behavior was that this had been an important to find a compromise in order to end the conflict. This move, so to speak, underlined the school's equality with the HEC, he continued; but if the members of the Chamber had other opinions, they could of course bring them forward.

Mme Milliot, the only woman represented in the General Assembly, suddenly rose and started talking: "Monsieur le Président, je souhaite instamment que vous ne considériez pas mon interventions comme une attaque personnelle, elle sera sans passion...elle sera fait uniquement sur les plans des principes..."⁶⁴ But what were these principles? Firstly, Milliot pointed to the fact that the Chamber had given in to external pressure. In her opinion, this was not only a sign of general weakness, but it also gave the

⁶¹ ACCIP, 42 C 3: *Procès-verbaux de la Commission Administrative d'ESCP*; Séance 18 janvier 1973: 2, 43 C 2: *Procès-verbaux de la Commission de HECJF*, Réunion 17 janvier 1973: 1.

⁶² ACCIP, 2 Mi 188: *Procès-verbaux de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 8 février 1973: 79.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.: 82.

impression that that the CCIP – as an institution – was about declining: “a Chambre se déonflera”. According to her, nobody could take an institution seriously that could not keep a steady course. Moreover, the new name had been known and agreed upon long since, as well as being approved of by the General Assembly.⁶⁵ Why then this sudden awakening or change? Well, the answer to that was simple, Milliot explained. There had always been a faction amongst the *anciens* that found it hard to accept the fact their beloved establishment was going to be merged with a *female* business school, and thereafter would share the name “École des Affaires de Paris”. In fact, within the group of partisans, which apparently was growing, the fusion was regarded as a kind of assimilation or absorption of the female school so as to keep the old name ESCP. But to tell the truth, Milliot continued, this acronym was neither old nor the school’s only one; “je vous rappelle que le sigle d’ESCP ne date que de 1969, avant cette école s’appelait l’ESCAE et elle a connu cinq ou six changement de nom”.⁶⁶ There was therefore no reason to respect the hullabaloo of the *anciens*. To tell the truth, this faction did not mind which methods they used to reach their goal, and she could support neither this behavior nor the president’s undemocratic way of working.

Millot’s strong statement was surprisingly enough acknowledged, if not supported, by the others. Nobody dared to speak against the president as she had done, for which reason Laumbard’s decision stood unchallenged, as if it was the modification needed to end the battle. But again the Chamber was wrong. Apparently, the deal with the president made the *anciens* believe themselves to be even stronger. The CCIP’s move for reconciliation was answered by a mass meeting, where it was agreed to boycott everything related to the unification.⁶⁷ The gender dilemma faced by the Chamber, when it wanted to make the business schools mixed, was not their business, the *anciens* argued.⁶⁸ And one day later, on February the 13th, the students of the ESCP went on strike with the support of their fellows and peers from Jouy-en-Josas.⁶⁹ Amongst the first and

⁶⁵ Ibid.: 83.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *Hérmès* (No. 37, 1973): IV -

⁶⁸ Ibid XI.

⁶⁹ ACCIP, 32 C 3: *Procès-verbaux de la commission de l’enseignement*, Séance 8 mars 1973: 2. The *anciens* of HEC were relatively hostile to the merger of the ESCP and the HECJF (*Hommes et Commerce*, no. 129, décembre 1972: 37).

second-year students the backing was especially strong. From their point of view, the EAP was an extension of a “girls’ school”, and thus impossible to accept. Others again saw the fusion as a way of masking the abolition of HECJF, which had been raised by the CCIP.⁷⁰ The debate had unmistakably entered its final phase.

HECJF Abolished and Gender Out of Sight

On April the 5th of 1973, the almost two-year long debate on coeducation was brought to an end.⁷¹ But, as happened the time before, the final verdict had been taken beforehand, which so to speak reduced the members of the Assembly into rubber-stamping “machines” instead of decision-makers. According to the new *fait accompli*, the École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP) was to be maintained and opened to girls, just as the École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC). École des Affaires de Paris (EAP), in contrast, was to replace École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF) with the aim of educating business employees for the Common Market.⁷² The unavoidable consequence of this was that the only female business school of France – if not of Europe – was shut down.

The closure of HECJF took place in the summer of 1975, which ironically enough coincided with the international women’s year, declared by the United Nations. For the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, however, feminist slogans had little weight. The arguments of the female business-school community were completely ignored in the final phase of the debate on *la mixité*, with the result that HECJF’s more than 60-year-long history was buried, if not completely forgotten. Its contribution to the history of French business education is, to a large extent, ignored by business historians and scholars. Due to its gender, HECJF was never seen as the male business-schools’ equal, and thus excluded from the history of European business education. This exclusion depicts, in my opinion, the force of the male norm in defining not only the field as such, but also which institutional experiences are valid for historical writing. The fact that the abolishment of HECJF in 1975 goes unmentioned in most histories of European and French business

⁷⁰ Ibid., *Hermès* (No. 37, 1973): XI.

⁷¹ ACCIP, 2 Mi 188-207: *Procès-verbaux de l’assemblée générale*, Séance 5 avril 1973: 138, BNF: *Le Monde* (6 avril 1973): 15.

⁷² ACCIP, 2 Mi 188-207: *Procès-verbaux de l’assemblée générale*, Séance 5 avril 1973: 138.

education is, in itself, evidence of the two-sex model as an hierarchical relationship, where the male version takes the limelight away from the female. The closure of the school represented a return to the one-sex model which existed before the creation of HECJF in 1916, emphasizing gender neutrality, not gender specificity and complementarity. But in the words of representatives of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, this elimination was the most desirable outcome.

When Monsieur Hémard, the head of the school's learning committee, announced the result of the debate on coeducation, the closure of HECJF was represented as the best solution for everybody, including the girls. In particular, as coeducation never had been a real possibility for the female business school. He said:⁷³

Donc, je crois que la solution pour HECJF est infiniment meilleur, finalement, surtout pour elles, que la solution précédente cas en fin de compte, au départ si nous avons pu faire d'HECJF une école mixte, si nous l'avions fait, nous aurions de toute façon change le sigle.⁷⁴

The president of the CCIP, in contrast, spoke more straightforwardly. "Nous avons repris le projet d'origine" he confirmed, as if the circle was completed and there was nothing more to discuss.⁷⁵ The EAP, Laumbard declared, "c'est une école nouvelle qui pariât aujourd'hui correspondre à un besoin réel".⁷⁶ Hence, a new and innovative "trio" was taking the place of the old one, indicating that the female business school no longer corresponded or fulfilled the demands of the new – and increasingly international – economy. Administrative business positions of the type "secrétaires générale" were said to be losing their standing in the business community. [L]a fonction n'existe plus dans les affaires moderne d'une certain importance...il est maintenant replace pas une équipe."⁷⁷

The irony in this last statement was of course that both the Chamber's General Assembly and general director had earlier characterized HECJF as a great success in providing the enterprises with "super-cadres".⁷⁸ But, in the final phase of the debate it

⁷³ Ibid.: 144. HECJF closed down in 1975.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: 144 – 145.

⁷⁵ Ibid.: 152.

⁷⁶ Ibid.: 145.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 42 C 2: *Procès-verbaux de la commission administrative de ESCP*, Séance 18 janvier 1973.

⁷⁸ ACCIP, 2 Mi 188-207: *Procès-verbaux de l'assemblée générale*, Séance 5 avril 1973: 143.

seems like the former superlatives were forgotten. HECJF was reduced to a school of futures secretaries and executive assistants, out of touch with modern business practices. Does this indicate that Frédérique Pigeyre was in the end right when she portrayed the introduction of coeducation as a political tool in the hands of the CCIP? There is at least one incident which supports this interpretation, and that concerns the Chamber's initial argument that coeducation was a way to rationalize its institutional portfolio. But, as we have seen, the final solution entailed no cutbacks at all, neither in terms of institutions nor of general costs.

Pigeyre's second claim, that the abolishment of HECJF was due to its conservative or old-fashion character, is nevertheless a misrepresentation. From what has been recounted above, the unification of the two schools was not blocked because of HECJF but by the students and *anciens* of the ESCP. Hence, the conservative force in the debate was not Mme Méniszez and her crew, but ESCP's "grand old men". By lobbying both the younger students and the Chamber's members, they managed to change the course to their own advantage. In other words, the *anciennes* and Mme Méniszez were incapable of getting their interests through, even though right from the start they insisted on being taken seriously. Equality for them meant being treated as ESCP's true equal, and not simply as a by-institution to be assimilated or taken over by a male school. To begin with, Méniszez and her supporters succeeded pretty well with this approach, but as the merger proceeded, the imbalance or unevenness between the male and female resources becomes visible. Not least because several of ESCP's own graduates were represented in the General Assembly, while HECJF had none.

When *la mixité* arrived, the council had only one female representative – Mme Milliot. Her bold support of the female business school, during the very last séance, was still not enough to change the course of events, as the final decision had been taken beforehand – behind closed doors. The revote, arranged the on April 5th 1973, showed that a large majority of the members supported the president and his peers. Only 2 of the 45 representatives in the CCIP' senate voted against his will.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, 10 assembly members abstained from the ballot, and during the last phase of the séance, two members made both critical and daring interventions. By asking, for instance, whether HECJF's

director and students had been given a say in this process, they managed to embarrass Laubard in front of the assembly, as he had to admit that there had been no recent contact at all between him and the female school. Only Hémard, the chairman of the school's assembly, had been informed about the process before the female students had paid the Chamber a visit a few days earlier, in order to express their hostility and anger against the resolution to get rid of their school. "Les élèves d'HECJF ont eu une réaction puisque, vous les savez, nous avons eu les portes de la Chambre de commerce bloquées..."⁸⁰

This last image, of the female students hammering on the CCIP's gate, gives not only an idea of how uneven the distribution of power was between the men and women operating within this field: It also illustrates that the development and status of the business schools, and in particular the development of a new one, EAP, continued to be shaped by specific ideas about manhood and womanhood, masculinity and femininity, even if gender had lost its institutional force. This was, as we saw in Chapter 7, not unique for France. Business graduates in Norway also managed to gain respect and power through the use of masculine symbols and titles without barring women institutionally. What made the Parisian scene different, however, was the long existence of a female business school on a higher level; i.e. the HECJF. Hence, gender or maleness had not only been a tacit norm, communicated with the aid of purported reasons. But, it was also for a long time an institutionalized reality and thus explicit, a clear display of a two-sex system or model of higher business education. The main idea behind this physiognomy was of course that biology was essential for the social roles of men and women, roles that in the field of business administration were embedded in the notion of gender complementarity, and the secretary – director relationship. Yet, as this way of reasoning began to break down in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as result of what can be characterized as a mental shift in favor of *the individual* and his or her equal rights, HECJF lost not only its institutional legitimacy. Rather, everything related to it became suddenly symbolically inferior, also in relation to the emerging discourse on gender equality.

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 152.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 144.

For HECJF, this institutional inferiority was symbolically attached to its acronym, especially its two last letters; "JF", for "young girls". This fact stigmatized everything it stood for, making the plan to merge it with the masculine ESCP simply impossible from a symbolic point of view. The behavior of the *anciens*, in opposing the Chamber's plan, illustrated therefore the importance of symbolic capital in the field of higher business education, and that gender was one resource among others such as selectivity, or exclusiveness. Whether this leads to the conclusion that the French business schools were still unstable constructions in the early 1970s is difficult to say, but it seems reasonable to argue that they continued to struggle for recognition despite the fact that the modernization following the American model had increased their legitimacy vis-à-vis state bureaucracy, academia and business. ESCP had, however, not yet undertaken these changes. At the moment when the debate on coeducation started, the school was still known as a middle-range school, educating good accountants for smaller enterprises. Hence, masculinity continued to be a key source of power and legitimacy for the graduates of the ESCP, until the "new paradigm" gave additional resources in the latter part of the 1970s.

The changing gender climate of this time had still more than practical – or institutional – implications. From what has been told, the debate and its outcome had also certain discursive implications for the actors within the field. Whereas the two-sex model, which was upheld until 1973 (1975), endorsed the principle of gender complementarity, coeducation indicated a return to gender equality or sameness. Of course, this "return" was further strengthened by the fact that HECJF was abolished, while the male tradition – represented by the ESCP – was not. Before the final decision was taken, in contrast, the language of "equality" and "difference" coincided. All the way through, Mme Méniszez and the *anciennes* of the HECJF maintained their focus on gender as "difference", which implied that equality in terms of outcomes was as important as equal chances or opportunities *per se*. For the women, this notion of gender equality was embedded in – or linked to – a general acknowledgment of the business realm as "man's world"; i.e. a place made by and for men. The CCIP, on the other hand, upheld a notion of gender equality fixed by the principle of equal opportunity (*égalité des chances*). In practice, this meant toning down existing and potential differences between men and women, a

strategy that was to have a major impact on the integration of women at HEC from September 1973 onwards.

'La Mixité sur le Campus HEC'

"Une jeune fille major HEC", the *Hommes and Commerce* announced in January 1974, after the first women found their way to the campus at Jouy-en-Josas.⁸¹ As with the introduction of coeducation at the École Polytechnique (X) the preceding year, the first mixed *concours* at HEC proved the girls to be as good – if not better – than the boys. HEC's counterpart to Mlle Anne Chopinet, who had become famous all over the country for her outstanding performance during the entry-examination for X in 1972, was called Florence Cayla.⁸² 17 years old Florence had – according to the press release of the *anciens* – outclassed all the male applicants during the written and oral *concours* for HEC, and was consequently placed as the school's "Number 1". However, during my interviews with former female students of HEC, some of whom were contemporaries of Mlle Cayla, I got the impression that this ranking was considered to be a form of publicity.⁸³ For instance, one – called Sophie for the occasion – said the following:

Well at the moment I entered HEC, in the first mixed *promotion*, we were 26 girls among the approximately 250 being admitted through the *concours*. And it is clear that in the period, the administration of the school feared devaluation as result of the introduction of coeducation. Accordingly, the best student at the first *promotion* mixed happened to be a girl. I think it can be explained by the fact that the best student at the first mixed *promotion* at Polytechnique the year before also happened to be a girl. So they just did it in order to be chic and maintain its reputation.⁸⁴

Sophie's interpretation of the ranking was, as the citation indicates, rather cynical. The school's announcement of Mlle Cayla as the best student during the selection, was only a symbolic act put on stage by the administration, in order to disprove its own fear; that the acceptance of female applicants would reduce its symbolic capital in relation to other elite schools as well as with the business world. This fear had, in Sophie's words,

⁸¹ *Hommes et Commerce* (no. 135, janvier 1974: 53.

⁸² *La vie des Cadres* (no. 4, octobre – novembre 1972): 26.

⁸³ See "Interviews" in the Bibliography.

⁸⁴ Interview with a former HEC student (23.03.2001): 2.

for long been present within the administration, but at the moment the decision was taken – to allow women to apply for admission – the tables were suddenly turned. From this moment onwards, the administration started in fact to do what it could to integrate the girls into this “world of men”. An interview of the school’s general director, Christian Vulliez, in *Hommes et Commerce* two years later, gives the impression that the rapid, and ongoing feminization of the school was almost a desirable development. As a matter of fact, it was presented as if it would help them put into effect the strategic goal of further diversification of the student population:

L’ouverture du concours de première année, depuis trois années, aux jeunes filles, a eu certainement des effets très positifs. Actuellement 20% des effectifs de l’école sont féminins et ce pourcentage va très probablement se développer encore.⁸⁵

From being seen as an undesirable route, feminization was suddenly embraced. In their speeches for the lucky newcomers in 1976, the president of the CCIP and the school’s director, would therefore also include this “happy” message. With the exception of the ongoing internationalization of the school’s curricula, the feminization was said to be the most groundbreaking change of the 1970s:⁸⁶ “Une autre caractéristique de l’École est l’affirmation de la féminisation, la première promotion sort cette année.”⁸⁷ Only three years after the girls were given the right to go to the school, feminization was a fact. And by the end of the period, the graduates’ newsletter informed its readers that as much as 34% of the students being admitted to the school belonged to the “second sex”, something that would provide the girls with “le meilleur accueil dans les entreprises”.⁸⁸ But what “accueil” or welcome was given to them at HEC?

The female applicants received in many ways the warmest welcomes when they crossed the thresholds at Jouy-an-Josas for the first time. On arrival they were immediately placed in boarding houses with male students, which meant that they could easily run the risk of being so-called “co-douche” with a boy.⁸⁹ Apparently the strategy of

⁸⁵ *Hommes et Commerce* (no. 145 – 146, novembre – décembre 1975): 57.

⁸⁶ *Hommes et Commerce* (no. 150, septembre 1976): 11, (mars 1977): 70.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: 11.

⁸⁸ *Hommes et Commerce* (No. 168, décembre 1980): 59; (no. 150, septembre 1976): 11

⁸⁹ Interview with former HEC student (19.10.1999): 11.

the school's management was "equal rights – equal treatment", which meant that the girls, to a large extent, were not given any special attention.⁹⁰ However, a few adjustments took place at campus, as result of *la mixité*. For instance, female sport teams in basketball and volleyball were created already the first year.⁹¹ And the annual *Triangulaire* between Polytechnique (X), École Centrale and HEC, was also opened for girls. At this particular point the feminization even gave the school a "competitive advantage" over the two others – which had almost no female students at all. The boys of the Polytechnique would normally win these competitions, because it was a military school where sport was a compulsory subject. But, according to one of my interviewees, Martine, X had problems getting the number of girls needed – so those few girls competing had to run twice. At HEC, in contrast, recruiting girls was not a problem: "We managed to get 20 girls without difficulties, so it was very easy for us to win", Martine recalled.⁹²

The male majority was still relatively overpowering in the first two to three years. Another female graduate interviewed – Frédérique – who entered HEC in 1973, said that the sexual pressure was enormous in the beginning. Not only that there was a massive majority of boys at HEC. The parties on Fridays even attracted male students over from Polytechnique, where they had very few female students.⁹³

Of course the guys knew there were not enough HEC girls, so they tried to get some girls from the outside – from Paris. But who would want to drive all the way out to HEC to attend a party? Nobody! So there were never enough girls...suddenly you had four guys standing there asking you to dance. Crazy! In addition we had the ISA people, and of course they had no women. And on top of that, most of the girls at HEC even had boyfriends outside, and the boys knew...⁹⁴

⁹⁰ The only thing I have come across is a handout about women in organizations, published by the director of the school in cooperation with the school's alumni association. *Femmes et organisations* by Christian Vulliez et al (1976/1977). In 1979, a study day in the name of "women and management" followed, initiated by assistant professor Jacqueline Laufer, an America-trained sociologist (*Hommes et Commerce*, No. 162, juillet 1979: 69 – 700, interview with Mme. Laufer 24.02.2001).

⁹¹ Interview with former HEC student (19.10.1999): 12.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ The campus of Polytechnique is situated a short drive from Jouy-en-Josas.

⁹⁴ Interview with former HEC student (21.03.2001): 14.

Having boyfriends on the “outside” was, according to Frédérique, a common strategy among the girls to handle the visibility and sexual pressure they faced on campus. Another was the “groupe femmes”, organized by some female candidates one year after coeducation was introduced. “It came into existence in 1975 if I’m not mistaken”, Frédérique said, “but this was a horrible mistake”, she continued:

You know this was the 70s, so boys were not allowed to attend this *groupe femmes*. Many feminists shared this attitude at that time – so I went there once because a girl told me about it and I thought I could afford to waste an evening. And I tell you, it was a waste – it was deplorable. Intellectually it was zero – nothing. Probably they felt the guys were hassling them, and they did not like it, but instead of saying it more pragmatically that they didn’t like it, they did it in this way. You can’t use the word sexism, because that is a theoretical one. But once they tried to approach the situation theoretically it collapsed. There was no theoretical point to be made, just the fact that they wanted to be left alone in order to work.⁹⁵

The women’s group was, in Frédérique’s words, of little importance. It was simply a passing fashion with no further implications for the milieu, a fashion that she – and many others – had problems identifying with, because it was not linked to an general theory about patriarchal domination and female suppression. Its only *raison d’être* was, in Frédérique’s words, caused by the boys’ constant chasing of the girls, a situation that stabilized during the third year: “The last year I was there it had nearly come close to normal”, she continued.⁹⁶

But actually, I had always more male than female friends at HEC, and I do not think there should be a difference. So from that point of view I was quite scandalized by the fact that in the beginning there was as a difference between girls and boys at HEC. Within my family we were taught to think that there was no difference at all. That was the Calvinist tradition of my mum.... but the ‘groupe femme’ was a total failure...⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid. 13 – 14. Another *groupe femmes* was created in 1981, of aim was to “d’élaborer une réflexion sur l’oppression de la femme dans notre société patriarcale dans sa globalité (couple, travail, et tous les domaines de la vie sociale”. But unlike the first group, established in 1975, the second allowed also male students to attend the meetings (*Le livre de l’Année 1981/82*: 134).

⁹⁶ Ibid.: 14.

⁹⁷ Ibid.: 13.

Martine agreed on this. She said:

There was nothing like a feminist movement at HEC. You know, things in France were very different from the States. The girls at HEC were all very good students. In fact, in order to get in you had to be. We were always working – not perfectly of course – but always more than the boys because we had something to prove.⁹⁸

Apparently, the girls felt that they had to compensate for being girls through hard work. They had, as Martine put it, to prove that they were as good as the boys. In terms of character, this made most of them even more conventional than the boys. Few of them seem in fact to have sympathized with the New Left, even if there was a considerable number of radicals left at HEC in the early 1970s – a kind of “post-May-68” phenomenon. When Frédérique arrived on campus in September 1973, a considerable number of the students supported the UEC – the “Union des étudiantes communistes” and voted PS, the Socialist Party, which in this period was led by Mitterand. There was also a minor group of Trotskyites and a few anarchists, sympathizing with “l’ANAR”.⁹⁹ But, as was said, few of the girls took part in this politicized milieu. On contrary “they were conventional...and the conventional were not interested in politics. They were very much individualistic”.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, the conditions for cultivating feminist ideas about “collective consciousness” and “female solidarity” were rather frail at HEC, and generally much frailer than at the universities.

The discrimination felt in class and on campus in the beginning seems to have been a passing problem, disappearing with the rising numbers of female students. Already in 1975, as much as 26% of the newcomers were girls. One woman, who started her studies at HEC that year, said that this made integration unproblematic: “We represented about one third of the *promotion*, so I didn’t get the feeling that it was strange being a girl at HEC. In fact I never had the feeling that being a girl in this environment was strange – really not at all!”¹⁰¹ One explanation to this experience of gender as

⁹⁸ Interview with former HEC student (19.10.1999): 14.

⁹⁹ Interview with former HEC students (21.03.2001): 9; (23.03.2001): 10. For more on the politicization of HEC during and after “May-68” see Marc Nouschi (1988); (1997).

¹⁰⁰ Interview with former HEC student (21.03.2001): 10.

¹⁰¹ Interview with former HEC student (20.01.2000): 2.

“equality” or “similarity”, apart from the fact that the girls no longer were a small minority numerically speaking, was that they already knew many of the male students from beforehand. Due to the system of compulsory preparation classes (the *prepa*), the male newcomers were already accustomed to having female classmates: “We had no problems with our male classmates, since we had taken the *class preparatoire* together”, Sophie told me.¹⁰² Another, who had prepared at the prestigious Louis le Grand in the center of Paris, had the following story to tell:

I took my *prepa* at Louis le Grand in Paris, which is very well known for being both competitive and difficult. There were 50 of us in the beginning of the year, but ended up being 37 – 36 at the end of the year. Thus, there is a clear selection at the *prepa* too, but many of the students from Louis le Grand manage to enter HEC after only one year’s preparation. At my time, about 1/3 of the pupils were girls. So I did not feel I was in a masculine sphere at all. I had many female friends at the *prepa*, apart from the male ones.¹⁰³

This last story highlights the integrating effect of the elite-school system. By following a specific track, an elite-school track, the girls give the impression of having integrated pretty easily among the boys – or at least presented it as if they did. In consequence, the female business graduates who I have spoken to, to a great extent confirmed the official gender discourse of “equality”, by playing down or even trivializing the notion of gender as “difference”. The major demarcations lines within the school were accordingly not between men and women, but, as one of the female business graduates said, the one “between the ones within and outside the establishment. You know there were a lots of *fils á papa* at HEC and still are. And of course, there was also a big difference between the ones coming from Paris and the ones from the provinces”.¹⁰⁴ Social class, but also geographical origin, was, in the words of this last woman, more important than gender. Frédérique went as far as to say that the whole phenomenon “École des Hautes Études Commerciales” in the 1970s was a question of social class: “HEC – in that period at least – was very much a class thing”.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Interview with former HEC student (23.03.2001): 9.

¹⁰³ Interview with former HEC student (18.02.2000): 2 – 3.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with former HEC student (28.01.2000): 10.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with former HEC student (21.03.2001): 8.

'HEC – in that period at least – was very much a class thing'

Although my interviews are, in many ways, random examples of what we may call the educational biography of the first generation of female HEC-graduates, they give a unique access to the practices of education, and thus also class. Education is, as the sociologist Stephen J. Ball has said, an important aspect of class by being one of the social arenas where it constitutes itself.¹⁰⁶ Rather than being something that just “is”, class hence is a relational concept as much as a state of mind, which is “realized and struggled over in the daily lives of families and institutions, as much as in the process of production”.¹⁰⁷ According to my interviewees, HEC was just such a place where class was realized, whether one wanted it or not. To attend the school for three years was a relatively costly affair. Apart from school fees, parents had to provide for the expenses of boarding and transport back and forth to the family home during holidays and weekends, plus the material needs. School attendance required, therefore, considerable economic capital in addition to cultural capital. But far from all students attending HEC in this period had an upper-class upbringing. Frédérique, who herself came from an upper-class family as her father was a diplomat, recalls that several of her friends among the *marginiaux*, had scholarships from the Parisian Chamber of Commerce, because their parents could not afford to pay the fees.¹⁰⁸ “One of my friends with a scholarship had a mother who worked as a teacher, and a father who was a so-called *petite fonctionnaire*”.¹⁰⁹

People on scholarships were normally left alone, in the sense that nobody cared. However, everybody tended to know who the *boursiers* (those on scholarship) were, and it was this *appartement de classe* that made the school unbearable for some – so unbearable that quitting was the only option. Frédérique’s only female friend among the *marginiaux*, Regina did so.

¹⁰⁶ Ball, Stephen J. (2003): 7.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ The *marginiaux* – or marginals – was a small minority of mostly boys at campus, many of whom used drugs.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with former HEC student (21.03.2001): 6.

She came from a typical proletarian background, and if I remember correctly Regina was among the very few girls with a *bourse* [scholarship]. And she could not stand the atmosphere. 'It stinks of the bourgeoisie here' she used to say. And it was right in a way, if you see it from her point of view. Even at the BOOM [the parties] things were very conventional.¹¹⁰

By being working-class and a girl, Regina was to a large extent faced with a double "difference"; and it was this identity or social "squeeze" that made her quit according to Frédérique: "I think you could get around at HEC if you were proletarian and a boy, but if you were proletarian and a girl, it became too much."¹¹¹

Without having any statistical overview of the social background of the female students in the 1970s, the few interviews that have been carried out support Frédérique's hypothesis or explanation – that very few of the girls at HEC in this period were from the so-called lower social classes. Only one of the 8 women I have interviewed had a working-class background. And when I asked this woman, called Marie, why she decided to apply for, and later accept admission to the HEC, she told the following.

I passed my *baccalauréat* [bac] in 1971, at the age of 16, and lived in the province, in a very small town. At school I was considered to be a very bright pupil. My parents did not represent the '*milieu de cadre*', and were not what you could call bourgeois. My father worked as a carpenter and my mother looked after the children – 7 all together. So my parents represented more the '*milieu populaire*' [working class]. None of my sisters and brothers had gone to higher education, and I was consequently a bit disoriented regarding choice of education. I had heard somebody talking about an engineering school, called 'Sup Lec', which was a *grande école*, but nothing else. I did well in all subjects at school, and decided therefore to prepare for HEC, since it had everything in it, though I had no idea what type of jobs or professions followed from having attended a school of this kind. I was not much aided either – my family got some information and the guidance counselor at school was not very helpful – I just remember we found out that I was interested in technology... Anyhow, I had to travel to Paris for the preparation, since we had nothing like that in our small town. One of my brothers worked as a conductor at the metro in Paris, so I stayed with him. I went to a *lycée* that prepared for HECJF. In the period, even HECJF was considered to be very competitive and difficult to enter. Among 50 pupils, only 3 of them were normally recruited to HECJF. Well, I passed the written *concours*, but luckily I never got as

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: 7.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

far as the oral the first year. I prepared another year in Versailles, at Lycée Hoche, which is a good school and was mixed for the first time, and entered HEC in 1973.¹¹²

The answer of Marie illustrates that the social reputation of HEC was as a school for the bourgeoisie, while it, on the other hand, put on a show about how education was regarded as the main site of social selection. For Marie, belonging to the *classe populaire*, it was also a way of climbing the social ladder. Attending HEC was for her a major social jump compared to her parents and siblings. Within the community of students at Jouy-en-Josas, she still was the exception that proved the rule of HEC being a school “pour les bourgeoisies”, a position she, in her own words, tried to compensate for through going into radical politics, and experimenting with both free sex and drugs on campus. Her educational credentials and experience made her, nevertheless, into an outsider or “stranger” in relation to her home community in the long run. After three years at HEC, she progressed into a middle-management position in a large public, Paris-based, company, and was never to return to her “small town in the province”. Her excellent performance had, in other words, secured her a place within the middle-class.

For the remaining interviewees, performance and class went hand-in-hand, in the sense that it was an explicit rule in their middle-class families that one prepared for a *grande école* if one was talented enough.

Its part of a track you know. If you are a good pupil in France you go to some type of *école prépa*, i.e. schools where you prepare either for an engineering school or a business school. And since I was a good student during my secondary school, I had to choose something of that type...well the message is that you should *not* go to the university.¹¹³

But why did the choice fall at business studies instead of engineering, if there was an explicit choice between engineering and business within the middle-class milieu? There are basically two main reasons for this choice, according to the candidates themselves: firstly the importance of their father's advice, who in most cases worked either as a medical doctor, an engineer, a business manager or as a *haut-fonctionnaire* in the public

¹¹² Interview with former HEC student (28.01.2001): 1 – 2.

¹¹³ Interview with former HEC student (19.10.1999): 1.

sector. The second factor mentioned was educational background and subjects of preparation. For instance, all the candidates spoken to had a *bac C* before being selected for admission at HEC, which meant that they had specialized in the sciences in upper-secondary school. As we have seen in previous chapters, HEC's position in the elite-school system meant that it to a large extent had adjusted as well as adapted to the selection methods used by the *grandes écoles* of engineering, which all had *bac C* as a prerequisite.¹¹⁴ But unlike the preparation for the engineering schools, *prépa HEC* taught a variety of subjects in addition to mathematics. "The entrance requirements at HEC at the time I went there was 25% mathematics, 25% languages, 25% French, and 25% history and geography. It's a lot of writing, and if you can't write properly you can't get in."¹¹⁵ The preparation had therefore a very generalist character and the humanities made up a great deal of the examination. This seems to have been to the girls' taste. Constance put this gender preference in the following way:

I took a *bac C*, and I like mathematics and wanted first to be a professor in mathematics, but in order to do so you have to take the *classe prépa scientifique* in France. But I did not like physics, being much better at mathematics and chemistry, and in the *classe prépa scientifique* there are only very narrow-minded and closed-up boys. So I decided to study statistics at the university instead, but my father wasn't very supportive. He proposed that I took HEC first, and the statistics afterwards. So I started at HEC a bit by chance, but also because the *class prépa HEC* contained subjects that interested me, such as history, geography, French, mathematics, philosophy etc. The courses were very general, varied and interesting....HEC is also very well known in general, and in the world of business. In fact, it was my father who told me about it. He had a colleague, who had taken HEC and therefore knew that it had come to accept girls. In my *lycée* nobody knew. In fact they told me the opposite – three years after *la mixité* was introduced.¹¹⁶

Aversion of physics was, generally speaking, an important motivation for choosing *prépa HEC*. By doing so, they got – as Constance put it – rid of all the "nerdy" guys while at the same time were able to continue studying a range of interesting subjects on a high

¹¹⁴ From 1978 onwards, HEC accepted also students with a specialization in economics and social sciences. Most of the students being selected for admission continued, however, to have specialized in the sciences. For more on current admission policies see Eirinn Larsen (2003b).

¹¹⁵ Interview with former HEC student (19.10.1999): 1.

¹¹⁶ Interview with former HEC student (18.02.2000): 1.

level. “With a *prépa HEC* I found a continuation of a generalist track”, Sophie said.¹¹⁷ “We had French, philo [philosophy], economic history and geography, and foreign languages – which I adored – and mathematics. But in general, the *prépa HEC* allowed me to continue studying the subjects I liked”.¹¹⁸

Concluding Remarks

The internal debate on coeducation within and between the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) and its three business schools had fatal consequences for the female experience within the field of higher business education in Paris. Due to the weighty critique and resistance expressed by the male business graduates, the CCIP had to go back on the decision to merge HECJF with the ESCP in April 1973. An unambiguous result of this was that École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF), established by Louli Sanua in 1916 in order to train women for administrative work in business, was closed down as soon as the students of the year 1972/73 had graduated. This erased all female experiences and arenas of higher business education, at the same time as it discursively implied a return to “equality” or “sameness” as the only valid argument or strategy for equality between the sexes in the commercial sphere. By this move, femininity lost its strategic force, both in relation to professional training and work, and “equality” and “difference” was suddenly posed as an impossible choice, whereas it previously was not.

HECJF made, as this – but also the previous chapter – has exemplified, use of both strategies and languages, while trying to create a space in which to work for women within the business community. However, in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, this line of reasoning was increasingly brought into discredit by the establishment, and those taking part in it. In light of the Scandinavian experience, the policy implications of the women’s liberation movement were rather few and feeble in France. Rather, the liberal democratic tradition of the French state apparatus promoted a policy of gender equality embedded in the notion of equal rights and equal opportunities, not the preferential treatment of those in majority with the aim of securing an equality of outcome. In like

¹¹⁷ Interview with former HEC student (23.03.2001): 1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

manner, the institutions of elite education, like Polytechnique and thus also HEC, endorsed meritocratic rules based on the liberal principle of individual achievement and free – and open – competition among “equals”. This system never assumed equality of outcome in relation to gender, only that inequalities are distributed more fairly and in accordance with individual abilities and commitment.

The decision to open HEC for girls led to a rapid feminization of the school in the 1970s. Women’s entry into HEC was primarily motivated by the school’s enclosure in the elite school community, even though its generalist character often was conclusive for the girls’ choice between engineering and business studies. So was the tradition of female elite education in business administration, represented by HECJF, but implicitly carried on by the “male” community after coeducation was introduced and the female business school closed down. This confirmed, in many ways, the importance of both social capital and gender in the feminization of the Parisian business schools in the 1970s, a process that by the end of the decade had resulted in approximately 32% of the student population at Jouy-en-Josas being female. The feminization of HEC, but also ESCP and ESSEC, weakened the strategic value of masculinity in the field of higher business education in France, as much as the abolishment of HECJF drained the weight of femininity. For example, HEC’s directors, Christian Vulliez attempts to make use of this feminization in a strategic manner in the 1970s, to diversify the student population further, had little validity in terms of either gender ideals or on the practices at Jouy-en-Josas.

The school’s administration, but also the girls’ themselves, took on the strategy and notion of gender as “equality” and “sameness” when they were faced with the new situation of coeducation in September 1973. With the return to the one-sex model, women were – for the first time in history – competing for admission to HEC, and also for higher business positions, on equal terms with men. In the words of the female graduates interviewed, the integration of the female students into this “universe of men” went relatively smoothly. As a matter of fact, most of them showed an extraordinary strong self-assurance during the interviews, derived from the logic of inclusion – exclusion inherent in the French elite school system. All approved in essence a very individualist language and value system, finding it hard to take seriously collective action on behalf of group characteristics like gender. The women’s group, established on

campus in 1975, was in retrospect readily seen as a trivial happening, with no political or practical implications on the integration of women into the "world of men". In Bergen and Norway, the situation was somewhat different.

The aim of women's liberation is not to make her a second copy of the man.

*Female NHH-student*¹¹⁹

CHAPTER TEN

Feminist Politics in Bergen: Taking 'Difference' into Account

"Are girls' educational choices out of touch with societal changes?" the head of the Equal Pay Council, Kari Vangsnes, asked in 1966.¹²⁰ The number of pupils enrolled in upper-secondary schools doubled in the period 1955 – 1965, and while almost half of these were girls, the probability of them continuing on to higher education was still lower than it was for the males.¹²¹ This both reinforced the traditional sexual division of labor, she stated, and kept women in low-wage positions. But only a few years after Vangsnes issued her guidance report on women's education, the propensity among girls to go on to higher studies started to rise vigorously.¹²² From the second half of the 1960s, Norwegian

¹¹⁹ *Bulle* (27/1975): 9 Citation in original: "Formålet med kvinnefrigjøringen er ikke å gjøre kvinnen lik mannen."

¹²⁰ Vangsnes, Kari (1966): 1. The Council for Equal Pay established in 1959, as result of Norway's ratification of the International Agreement on Equal Pay. In 1972, the council was reorganized as the Council for Equal Status.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, Østebye, Anne-Lise (1969): 15, Thagaard, Tove (1967): 49, Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gerd Mordt (1992): 33 – 34. See also the historical statistics developed by the Statistical Bureau: http://www.ssb.no/emner/historisk_statistikk/tabeller/5-5-11t.txt, Utdanning og forskning: Tabell 5,11 – Graduates of general secondary schools, upper stage.

¹²² Amdam, Rolv Petter & Gerd Mordt (1992): 3. While the number of male students was more or less constant in the period 1975 – 1989, the amount of female students more than doubled within the same period.

universities underwent – just as the French – a substantial feminization, with the faculties of art, medicine and law being the ones that experienced the most important impacts.¹²³

In the beginning, business economics did not have an equal appeal to girls as language studies or medical school. There was, nonetheless, a steady growth of female students at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) from the early 1970s onwards, and in 1985 almost 40% of the incoming students in Breiviken were female, which highlights the vast feminization that took place over a relatively short period of time. Yet, the regular arrival of women into higher business studies took a considerable longer time in Norway than in France. Even if there had been no institutional barriers preventing girls from entering the Norwegian field since 1903, NHH had still only 20% the female students in the late 1970s, by which time HEC already had passed the magical 30% limit.¹²⁴

The current – and last chapter on Norway – addresses the feminization of the Norwegian business school in Bergen as a question of change and continuity of gender ideals and practices. It aims above all at understanding the cultural dynamics and adjustments of the students, and their latent impact on gender discourses and institutional policy-making. We shall start, however, with the authorities' answer to the growing demand for higher learning in the 1960s, including business administration.¹²⁵ The state-initiatives taken to meet this challenge never managed to reduce NHH's elite status. On the contrary, the ratio between applicants and admitted students increased rapidly at NHH in the 1970s, creating a visible, and tangible, mis-match between official ideology and practice within the field.

¹²³ Forland, Astrid & Anders Haaland (1996): 614, Tabell 12. By 1985, as many as 50% of the students attending medical school in Bergen were female. For the field of higher education in general see http://www.ssb.no/emner/historisk_statistikk/tabeller/5-5-14t.txt.

¹²⁴ See Appendix 3. This was also the case at its private counterpart, BI.

¹²⁵ Between 1960 and 1980, the number of students tripled in Norway, and at the end of the period there were as many as 74,000 registered students among the country's approximately four-and-a-half million inhabitants. In 1980, there were approximately 40,600 Norwegian university students, including graduates of professional schools like NTH and NHH, whereas the regional colleges established in the late 1960s hosted about 33,200 students all together. The sources for these numbers are to be found at the Statistical Bureau (SSB) websites: http://www.ssb.no/emner/historisk_statistikk/tabeller/5-5-16t.tt and http://www.ssb.no/emner/historisk_statistikk/tabeller/5-5-14t.txt.

Rising Demand and Supply in Higher Education

Education and higher university learning was viewed as a governmental responsibility in postwar Norway. The private corporations and associations did, therefore, little to facilitate and meet the rising demand for higher education.¹²⁶ This does not mean, however, that they were indifferent to the educational changes taking place at that time. Actually, the local business communities were important driving forces in the creation of regional colleges from the late 1960s onwards; an involvement that had a major impact on the organization of Norwegian business education.¹²⁷ Within less than a decade, 8 new regional colleges were created, many of which provided shorter vocational courses in business administration.

Besides meeting the fast growing demand for higher education, the regional colleges were primarily created to facilitate economic growth and productivity in the provinces. The first ones, established in fall 1969, were located along the southern and western coasts, and in the following year new colleges were built inland.¹²⁸ Lillehammer and Bø (in Telemark) were typical rural-centers in need of both educational and commercial stimuli, according to the governmental authorities. So was Bodø, where the first North Norwegian College opened in 1971. Until the foundation of the University of Tromsø in 1968, there was no institution of higher learning north of Trondheim.¹²⁹ The creation of Bodø College hence was an important achievement for the northern regions, at the same time as it illustrates the regional political purpose informing the creation of the regional colleges in general. Geographically, they were all located in counties which lacked institutions of higher learning, in the hope that they would have a positive effect on the regional development.

An educational committee appointed by government in 1965 formed the basis for

¹²⁶ Another important reason for this is the lack of large-scale corporations in Norway. The industrial complexes created in Norway during the 1950s and 1960s were in fact mostly owned and run by the state. Private business donations to activities within the field of research and higher education have, therefore, tended to be equally modest.

¹²⁷ Amdam, Rolv Petter (1998): 231. In a period of less than ten years, Norway got 8 new institutions of higher learning defined as regional or district colleges. 1969: Kristiansand, Molde, Stavanger; 1970: Bø (in Telemark), Lillehammer; 1971: Bodø; 1977: Halden; 1979: Rena.

¹²⁸ The same year, 9 years of schooling becomes mandatory.

¹²⁹ Danielsen, Rolf et al (1995): 470. The University of Trondheim was founded the same year.

the restructuring of Norway's educational system in the 1970s. The mandate given to the commission, and its chairperson Kristian Ottosen, was to assess the possibilities of easing the flow to the universities by creating a more vocational alternative to the old structure.¹³⁰ The final solution chosen, to construct a binary system consisting of undergraduate colleges and universities including professional schools, was not particularly Norwegian, though. Many European countries went about solving the rising demand for higher education in the very same way. The French IAE, for instance, was a non-university establishment, which offered shorter and highly vocational studies in business administration. Within the Norwegian colleges, the business program was only one option among many. The political emphasis on regional development made it, nevertheless, into an important part of the new educational landscape.¹³¹ For example, the Parliament's approval of an experimental program for the schools, in May 1969, concerned first and foremost the business program.¹³² There was, moreover, a strong belief in the extended economic effects of this course within the political milieu. Many believed business graduates would have an innovative effect on local economic development through their commercial expertise, which illustrates a very instrumental and economically-based approach to higher education and training. In accordance with the prevalent political discourse, knowledge and candidates were looked upon as input factors in the economic machinery, while the task of the state was to prepare for economic growth in the districts through a flexible and decentralized system of higher education.

Even so, the Ottosen reform was far more than a quintessential technocratic reorganization in the interests of the capitalist state, as left-wing radicals liked to portray it.¹³³ The district colleges were first of all created to meet the ever-increasing flow to higher education, secondly to slow down the emergence of inequalities between people from different parts of the country, particularly in the south and the north, by promoting economic growth in the regions. Thus, the "Ottosen-reform" was clearly tied to a social-democratic vision of an egalitarian or classless society, characterized by high degree of

¹³⁰ This mandate was given in 1965.

¹³¹ K7 (Nr. 4, 1970): 7 – 9.

¹³² Andam, Rolv Petter (1998): 232, St.prop. nr. 1936 (1968 – 69).

¹³³ K7 (Nr. 3, 1970): 16 – 19.

social and professional mobility, to be achieved through, for one thing, educational equality and flexibility. That NHH, with its high degree of selectivity, went against this ideology attracted little attention, however. Through its scientific expertise, it had become a focal point in the democratization of higher education in Norway during the 1960s and 1970s. Paradoxically, this helped to solidify its elitist status, while the regional colleges developed into almost “second-range” institutions both in terms of selectivity and scientific recognition.

NNH's Elite Position Strengthened

On request from Kristian Ottosen, the Norwegian business school in Bergen agreed to prepare the new college degree in business economics and administration.¹³⁴ The result of this was that “the teaching roughly mirror[ed] [NHH's] two first years of study”, combining the discipline of business economics with political economy, organizational studies and foreign languages.¹³⁵ Yet, there were more than curricular similarities between the two. By being divided into four separate courses, running for one semester each, the regional program was also designed in a way that made it possible to apply for NHH's third year after graduation. But, neither the faculty nor the students at NHH were in favor of Ottosen's idea of horizontal relocation. Even if a new law on examinations was presented in 1970, to coordinate better the binary system which had just been created, it brought few advantages to the regional graduates of business administration in terms of educational mobility. The most obvious reason for this, apart from a general skepticism towards “intruders” at NHH, was the ongoing debate on the reform of the study program in Bergen. The idea of expanding its three-year-long curriculum with an additional year was, in fact, launched at the same time as the regional colleges were created. The result of the debate was not a national curriculum consisting of two parts or divisions, one of which was of a two-year duration. Instead, it comprised three years plus one, which made it difficult to coordinate the regional colleges with the program of the country's “civil economists”, as Ottosen initially wanted.

¹³⁴ K7 (Nr. 4, 1969): 2; (Nr. 4, 1970): 7, *Bergens Tidende* (01.09.1969).

¹³⁵ Ibid. Citation in original: “Opplegget til denne linje er unnfanget og satt ut i livet av Norges Handelshøyskole, og undervisningen er grovt sett modellert etter de to første åra ved NHH”.

With the introduction of NHH's new structure in 1975, it was almost impossible to transfer to Bergen from a regional college. Instead, regional students had to compete for admission into the first year with the others. In a period of fast-growing demand for higher business education, this selective entry policy made NHH's graduates into an exclusive group within the Norwegian social and corporate landscape. So while "Norway developed what was probably the most decentralized higher educational system in the world" in the 1970s, to quote Rolf Danielsen et al, the emerging elite status of the civil economists was the reverse side of the egalitarian medal. NHH's selectivity in fact rose by more than 100% in the 1970s; and in the first half of the 1980s, there were as many as 2,494 applicants for about 300 places at NHH. This selection is almost as high as at HEC, even if the size of the French population is much larger than the Norwegian, and the French elite schools were more exclusive.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, the ratio between applicants and the number of students who entered NHH reached a very high level during this period, due to a rising demand not only for higher education in general, but also for business education, in particular.

The emerging similarity between NHH and HEC in terms of selectivity tells, moreover, something important about a counter-drive against educational equality in Norway in the latter part of the twentieth century. Even if the elite status of NHH has to be defined as an unintended result of political priorities, and not of strategic thinking, neither its students nor staff seemed very enthusiastic about the idea of increasing its capacity by taking on more students. Nor did they want to cooperate with business graduates from the "outside".¹³⁷ For example, the students were vigorously against the private business school BI's effort to enter the Nordic Network of Civil Economists (NHS) in the late 1960s, of which NHH-graduates were the only Norwegian member; "the prevailing view among us is that BI does not belong to the NHS".¹³⁸ And when the parliamentary debates on the "civil economist" degree took place in the early 1980s, with the result that both BI and the regional college of Bodø got the right to grant the title, the

¹³⁶ Larsen, Eirinn (2003a): 151. The number of applicants to HEC in 1980 was 2,522, whereas the vacancies were 264. See Appendix 11, Table II, and Appendix 13.

¹³⁷ *Bulle* (Nr. 2, 1968): 2; (Nr. 21, 1969): 2.

¹³⁸ *Bulle* (Nr. 6, 1968): 2 Citation in original: "der er vår absolutte oppfatning at de [BI] ikke hører hjemme i NHS-samarbeidet."

students opposed it in the strongest terms.¹³⁹ BI was, according to the students, highly unworthy of the privilege of providing the same title as NHH. This gives evidence of a very superior, if not aristocratic, attitude towards business graduates from other schools and institutions.¹⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, the episode evokes the *esprit de corps* so characteristic of the French elite-school system.

But despite the unintended consequences of the educational reforms of the late 1960s, of which NHH's elite status is the most striking, increasingly more girls entered the field of higher business studies during the 1970s.¹⁴¹ Both the regional colleges and the Norwegian business school located in Bergen underwent a glaring feminization in the period between 1970 and 1985.¹⁴² The changing gender balance at NHH is the most striking, however, simply because it takes place at the same time as its selectivity was dramatically increasing. By breaking the male hegemony, this process balanced out some of its elitist quality, at the same time as it enabled young girls to do more than secretarial work after graduation. It is to this process and its driving forces we shall now turn.

The Feminization and its Driving Forces

The most common explanation given by the Norwegian women I interviewed, when asking them why they decided to apply for NHH, was a combination of them being "good at school" with "mere coincidence".¹⁴³ Only one of the ten interviewees told me that the decision to enter NHH was part of a larger professional plan, "to make money like the boys".¹⁴⁴ But as we saw in the foregoing chapter, this does not necessarily mean that the remaining 9 business candidates had no particular reason for entering a higher business

¹³⁹ *Bulle* (Nr. 20, 1979): 1, 18; (Nr. 14, 1982); (Nr. 7, 1983): 2; (Nr. 8, 1983): 9, and Interview with former NHH student (20.07.2001): 2. The committee established to look into this issue in 1982, also known as the Hermansen-committee, was behind the proposition to give BI and the Bodø College the right to award the degree of *siviløkonom*, on terms of equality with NHH in Bergen. This happened in 1985, after a parliamentary resolution.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with former NHH student (13.08.2001): 13.

¹⁴¹ There was also a careful change in the geographical distribution in the 1970s and 1980s to the expense of students from Oslo and Akershus. Most of the students continued to be drawn from Bergen and the nearby regions though, a fact that truly has had democratic implications, in the sense that it has made NHH less connected to the economic elite of the capital.

¹⁴² See Appendix 4, Table I, for an overview of the percentage of female students enrolled in business administration at the Regional College of Bø (in Telemark). For a statistical overview of the feminization of NHH and BI, see Appendix 3, Table II.

¹⁴³ See Bibliography, Interviews.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with former NHH student (05.07.2001): 1.

program of the kind offered by the NHH. Actually, the life-stories told by the female civil economists, who graduated in the period 1970 – 1986, suggest that this important decision was everything but the result of “pure chance”. The story of one woman, here referred to as Lisa, shows that the decision to become a civil economist was a product of many social forces, of which gender was only one. She said:

I started in '71, just after graduating from the *gymnasium*. I was rather good at school and dreamt of medicine, but also applied for NHH and was accepted. Thus, my choice of education did not result from any conscious action and strategy. I had specialized in science and wanted to become a medical doctor, but admission to the faculty of medicine was difficult and I lacked the necessary points. My mother said moreover that NHH offered a short and straightforward training for somebody who would most probably stay at home, taking care of the house. Yes, she meant what she said. I, in contrast, had no ideas what I would use it for. I had no ideas whatsoever about economics, so it was all a mere coincidence.¹⁴⁵

Although Lisa presents her educational choice as purely accidental, the quote gives a different impression. In fact, her big dream – according to herself – was to become a medical doctor, not a civil economist. She happened to start at NHH as a result of the fact that she was not good enough for admission to medical school. The faculty of medicine also practiced, as was told in chapter 7, a *numerous clauses* policy at this time, but the selectivity during admission was much higher than at NHH. Only candidates with excellent grades from upper secondary education were accepted, and Lisa was apparently not among them. Her marks were still very good, for which reason she was selected for admission everywhere else she applied, including NHH. But what made Lisa accept the latter; of which she said she knew nothing?

I applied for the teacher college, the nutrition studies at Blindern [UiO], along with NHH, medicine and a few others, and was accepted everywhere except at medical school – the study I most of all wanted to undertake. But when I was selected for admission at NHH, because it was very difficult to enter, I accepted. I don't think it was more deliberately than that.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Interview with former NHH student (19.12.2000): 1.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

The explanation given by Lisa for her educational preference for NHH before other types of training that, in fact, had more in common with her interest for medicine, bears evidence of a social affinity for elite education. Practically speaking, this meant going for the type of school that was looked upon as the “best” or most prestigious, a notion that in Norway as in France seems to have been closely connected to selectivity or exclusiveness. “When I was selected for admission at NHH, because it was very difficult to enter, I accepted”, Lisa said. Accordingly, she was very aware of the fact that NHH was considered to be a so-called “good” or prestigious school. What she did not do, however, was to characterize it as an “elite school”. Since Norway never had had any elite schools officially, unlike France, the elite status of NHH was something implicit – or taken for granted. One of the other women answered, for instance, the following when she was asked the very same question, about why she came to study business economics in Bergen:

The reason why I started was accidental. When I attended high school there was an unspoken rule which said that all good pupils with an ambition in life had to study medicine. But I was too lazy at school to be accepted [at medical school]. You therefore end up doing what other people tend to do. Either you study law or business economics.¹⁴⁷

According to this woman, the notion of medical school as an elite education appeared to be an “unspoken rule” in her social milieu. This made the Norwegian elite-school mentality so to speak invisible to the naked eye, though highly effective in conditioning certain people’s educational choices. Like Lisa, this woman – called Carina – had neither the grades nor the commitment needed to become a medical doctor. Consequently she decided – according to herself at least – to do what her friends did. She applied for what was viewed as the “second option” to medicine. But unlike the French graduates who I spoke to, none of the Norwegian women openly expressed a preference for elite education. Rather, they had a tendency to understate it as something everybody took for granted. This was the case also with social class.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with former NHH student (20.07.2001): 1.

The Importance of Social Class

Information about the Norwegian women's social background never came up spontaneously as in the French interviews. In fact, it was not until I carefully asked about their parents that the issue of social class was brought on to the table. Lisa was no exception. During the interview she never mentioned her class background, but when I asked about her parents' social background, towards the end of the interview, she answered straightforwardly, however:

Middle-class. My father worked in Oslo and was very loyal to the family in the weekends. He had no higher education, but had managed to work himself up the ladder. My mother had completed upper secondary school, and that was a bit unusual. She had done a course in commercial training in fact, in a business *gymnasium* and was a bit ambitious on my dad's behalf in terms of education. It was very important to both of them that we took up the education possibilities they never had. You know, they both grew up during the war....so there was no doubt that I was encouraged to continue.¹⁴⁸

Lisa's middle-class background is in many ways typical for the girls entering NHH in the 1970s. But unlike the French interviewees, most of the Norwegians had parents with no – or limited levels of – higher education. Socially, this made them more *lower-middle* class than upper-middle class, which in fact suggests that the feminization of NHH represented a kind of continuity with the former “secretarial schools”. For the Norwegian women interviewed, this gender-conditioned continuity materialized first and foremost in their educational background. Among the ten interviewed, eight women had attended a commercial high school before applying for the NHH, while the remaining two had specialized in science, which was the most common background among the French women. The reason why this seems to have been the opposite in Norway, derived not only from the fact that intermediate commercial education was far better integrated, nationally, than in France. But, it also displays an emerging academic as well as social recognition of the business disciplines. While HEC, in a context which lacked this social recognition, continued to select students on behalf of their *culture générale*, and thus

¹⁴⁸ Interview with former NHH student (20.07.2001): 1.

avored children of the upper social classes, knowledge in business economics and the neighboring disciplines provided an important path of entry to NHH, in combination with science among the boys, and modern languages among the girls.¹⁴⁹ This provided for the prospect of social mobility for the lower-middle classes, at the same time as it facilitated women's entry into higher business education when the general demand for university studies exploded in the 1970s.

There is relatively little information available concerning the social background of NHH's students over time. In fact, the only statistical material that exists is a survey published by *Bedriftsøkonomen*, which dates from 1955.¹⁵⁰ The extract from this account on "father's occupation" shows that the majority of the students attending NHH in the mid 50s, were from the so-called lower-middle class. While 29, 9% of the fathers were either self-employed or salaried business managers in 1955, 52, 7% of them belonged to the more classical lower-middle-class professions and occupations, such as teachers and office clerks, which suggest a social difference between the students attending NHH and HEC.¹⁵¹ To what extent the feminization changed this is, however, difficult to tell. There are no statistics available that confirm a similar development as to that which took place in HEC, where the mass-entry of women confirmed rather than challenged its upper-class reputation. But, the Norwegian sociologist Marianne Nordli Hansen has argued that the recruitment to institutions of elite education, such as NHH and NTH, became considerable more dominated by the Norwegian upper-middle-class during the 1980s.¹⁵² Her findings also show that men and women belonging to this class tended to go for different kinds of higher education. While the boys often chose the so-called elite education in the 1980s, the female representatives had a tendency to prefer more traditional university studies, a finding that – if it is found to be statistically valid also for

¹⁴⁹ ANHH, *Siviløkonomstudiet 1984*: 5.

¹⁵⁰ *Bedriftsøkonomen* (Nr. 2/1955): 107. This survey shows that the students had fathers according to the following professional categories: farmers (7.9%), foremen, workers or artisans (15.3%), office workers (17.7%), teachers (18.9%), self-employed or business managers (29.9%), seamen (2.4), retired (3%) and none (4.9%).

¹⁵¹ One reason for this, apart from the fact that NHH required no fees, might be the students' access to installment free loans at NHH. As early as in 1940, and thus seven years before the state-owned agency for so-called "student loans" was created, NHH launched this program (Eirinn Larsen, 2003: 172).

¹⁵² Hansen, Marianne Nordli (1999): 193 – 194.

NHH – would mean that the girls being selected for admission at NHH in fact represented an inferior social class to their French equals, as much as their male peers.¹⁵³

A reasoning of this kind is of course very tentative, but it fits my impression from having interviewing former NHH students. For instance, all the women interviewed who started NHH in the early 80s, had a commercial high-school degree beforehand.¹⁵⁴ Certainly, while this might have changed throughout the decade, statistics from 1984 show that the majority of students admitted at NHH that year had specialized in economics, regardless of their sex. And if it is the case that this choice happens to have different social implications for boys and girls, it might illustrate an interesting class difference between male and female NHH-students, on the one hand, and Norwegian and French female business graduates, on the other. But the feminization of NHH was not only a question of social class. As with their educational backgrounds, it also evoked continuity with former gender regimes, accompanied by a few – but equally important – changes in terms of ideals and practices of womanhood and femininity. In what follows we shall, therefore, turn back to the late 1960s.

Change and Continuity in Gender Ideals and Practices

In the late 1960s, there was no inevitable connection between having an upper-secondary business degree and continuing on to higher business studies. As another woman phrased it, when asked to recall why she decided to apply for NHH after graduating from the Oslo Commercial Gymnasium (OHG):

At the time I attended the [OHG] there was approximately a fifty – fifty divide between male and female pupils, though very few of the girls had any further plans for after graduation. It was in many ways a kind of education that made us a perfect secretary. In my class there were only two boys, in addition to me, who continued on to the Norwegian business school in Bergen.¹⁵⁵

Saying this, that the most common point of arrival for girls undergoing a commercial training in the late 1960s, was a secretarial position, might make one wonder what made

¹⁵³ Ibid.: 196.

¹⁵⁴ ANHH, *Siviløkonomstudiet 1984*: 6. Or they attended the so-called “social-science” specialization, which included both political and business economics.

certain women like Ann, and later also Lisa and Elisabeth, to take the great jump from upper-secondary to higher business education? Was it as a result of interests, ambitions or simply good advice?

At the point when Ann started off in Bergen, continuation into higher university studies seems to have required individual strength and commitment, as well as family support and backing. But unlike the French case, the Norwegian women who were interviewed put little emphasis on their fathers. Due to the existence of free loans while studying, none of the girls were dependent on financial support from home, as was the case in France. Support and advice concerning education seems thus to have been rather disconnected from the fathers' paternal power. Instead the Norwegian women tended to talk about their mothers as being their most "influential" supporters and educational strategists, apart from themselves. Lisa said, "My mother brought me everything necessary to apply there [NHH], saying it was a first-class education."¹⁵⁶ Several others told similar stories, while yet another, Elisabeth, noted that it actually was because of her mother that she ended up studying business economics.

Originally, Elisabeth's idea was to become a vet like her late father, but she needed more mathematics and physics in order to be accepted, as she had attended a commercial high school, not a classical gymnasium.¹⁵⁷ Before graduation she therefore applied for various schools and higher university studies, among them the Norwegian business school in Bergen, but during her summer vacation – which she happened to spend in Paris – she changed her mind, and wanted to spend one year preparing for the veterinary course. In the meanwhile, however, she had been selected for admission at NHH, and she wrote back home to her mum saying that she could just reject the offer from Bergen. Her mother however did exactly the opposite, accepting her daughter's offer of admission: "Hence, it was in many ways to her credit that I went to study in Bergen", Elisabeth acknowledged, "but I for sure wanted to get away from home too".¹⁵⁸

Ann, on the other hand, whose mother had been sick since she was three, brought up her teachers when explaining how she got to know about the NHH. Since nobody in

¹⁵⁵ Interview with former NHH student (05.09.2000): 1.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with former NHH student (20.07.2001): 1.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with former NHH student (19.12.2000): 2 – 3.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: 3.

her family had ever attended anything more than elementary school, she needed to get information and support from elsewhere. She told the following story;

At OHG I had, for one thing, a very good teacher in economics, and he encouraged me to continue on to Bergen and the NHH. In addition I had a very supportive English teacher, who took an active part in an association for Norwegian female academics, and which provided vocational guidance particularly for girls. I went there, and from what I understood they defined the 'backing of girls' to be crucial. They rented a big room down at the university and made us meet representatives from various professions, including a female economist.¹⁵⁹

For Ann, information and vocational guidance was decisive for her final educational choice. That she worked for a whole year in a publishing house to meet NHH's high entrance requirement shows, moreover, that she was very committed to her choice. "My main interest was economics", Ann told me, an interest that was more than rare among her contemporaries.¹⁶⁰ Most of the interviewees still underline a shift of values and preferences among middle-class girls in the 1960s and 1970s. This mental shift pushed an increasing number of them to continue with higher studies instead of getting married, or simply applying for secretarial work. That their mothers also carried on these values is interesting to note.

Lisa's mother was, for instance, very ambitious on behalf of her own daughter. Despite her traditionalist remark about women and work, she still wanted Lisa to undergo professional training like herself. It is still fascinating to see that Lisa's mother still wanted her daughter to continue on to something "higher" and "better" than herself. The recommendation to apply for NHH hence illustrates classic middle-class values such as social mobility, which in the long run led to an inflation in the education system. A high-school degree was worth much less in the early 1970s than at the time Lisa's mother made the same choice. But unlike her mother, Lisa never planned to stay at home, "having kids" only. She and every one of the female graduates interviewed have worked full time, though without forfeiting marriage, family and home. To be exact, all but one of the ten had children of their own, with the result that they combined work and family.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with former NHH student (05.09.2000): 1.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.: 2.

This suggests that the mass entry of especially married women into the workforce during the 60s and 70s was of major importance for the feminization of NHH. Whereas the established gender regime of the 1950s allowed women, particularly those with lower and intermediate business education, to make a living as office clerks if they remained unmarried, the 1960s brought new ideals, but also practices, concerning womanhood and femininity. Wage work became increasingly important also to married women, with the result that the number of wage-earning wives and mothers doubled between 1960 and 1970.¹⁶¹ The decade prior to the feminization of NHH represents in this case an important rupture in the history of women in Norway, and subsequently laid the foundation for what we currently refer to as the two-income family.¹⁶²

The booklet *A Woman's Place is Where*, issued by the Labor Party in 1965, is a good illustration of this change of gender ideals in the early 1960s.¹⁶³ Produced by various intellectual women like Harriet Holter under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Einar Gerhardsen, the book announced – as much as confirmed – a radical change of attitude towards women. The Labor-led discourse on gender, which had given priority to the male breadwinner as far back as to the interwar period, was said to be on the point of collapsing to the advantage of equality between the sexes. This gave the gainfully employed (married) woman new political legitimacy in Norway, yet without neglecting her “old” place. In accordance with the historical interpretation of the program, which has been provided by Gro Hagemann, the announcement for change represented also a clear continuity with the old line of “complementarity”.¹⁶⁴ For the authorities, the home was a reference point of equal importance as wage-work for women.

Entering a Man's World

Women's entry into NHH throughout the 1970s affirmed to a large extent this duality between work and home, new and old practices. On the level of the individual it evoked, fundamental challenges, however – derived from the fact that they were entering a “man's world”. The student weekly *Bulle*, initiated in 1968, became an important outlet

¹⁶¹ Blom, Ida (1999): 312 – 313.

¹⁶² Hagemann, Gro (2004).

¹⁶³ Hagemann, Gro (2003): 146 – 147.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.: 146.

for frustrated girls at NHH, who were finding it more than difficult to integrate with the men.¹⁶⁵ According to the first female writers, the school environment was both devilish and male chauvinistic: "You all think that you are something great, having power over every girl at this place", a girl wrote in 1968.¹⁶⁶ The women interviewed told similar stories. "Given the amount of boys, NHH was a rather rough place to integrate, and as a girl you couldn't afford to be very sensitive. Actually, I think you had to be rather tough to survive within the milieu those days, for which reason many of the girls quit during the first year", Lisa remembered.¹⁶⁷ Ann, however, never forgot the following experience, which occurred just after her arrival:

In one of the first days I happened to speak to one of my new classmates in the restaurant, and he told me straight out that he thought it was a really silly that NHH accepted girls. 'Oh, do you mean that', I said. 'Yes', he replied, 'because if you hadn't been here, my friend would have been selected instead, since he was the first on the waiting list'. Imagine such an environment. Fortunately, I was rather robust, but there was a limit for my self-confidence too, although I had been politically active since the age of 15.¹⁶⁸

That NHH's masculine milieu was more than difficult to access for those who were "different" in the late 1960s and early 1970s, seems evident.¹⁶⁹ Other than being a small minority, and thus highly visible, the girls had to construct a female alternative to the "happy male seducer", to borrow vocabulary from the author Agnar Mykle. At the same time the boys needed to adjust to the fact that a growing number of their classmates happened to be female. This called for more than changes that happen with time. In fact, it required individual strength as much as collective action, flexibility and self-reflection. Ann remembered that the girls in her year, 11 in all, developed very different strategies in order to cope with the visibility. Whereas she, according to herself at least, tried to blend in by committing herself to various activities at school, like the newspaper, most of the female students in her year escaped from the place as soon as teaching was over for the

¹⁶⁵ The student newsletters *Bulle* and *K7* have been crucial supplements to the interviews in order to access the students' own experiences of the feminization at NHH.

¹⁶⁶ *Bulle* (Nr. 8, 1968): 5.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with former NHH student (16.08.2001): 2.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with former NHH student (05.09.2000): 2 – 3.

day.¹⁷⁰ For them, attending NHH was primarily about accomplishing a degree, not taking part in a milieu. "They simply found it impossible to integrate and make friends with the boys", She explained.¹⁷¹

But also when the girls started to voice their complaints about male behavior at the Saturday-night dance for instance, anonymity was an important line of attack; "with a cigarette in your mouth and a superior, investigating eye you walk around, examining every girl".¹⁷² Every female contribution to the gender debate in *Bulle* was unnamed in the beginning. Anonymity, or invisibility, seems therefore to have been a widespread strategy among the female students, both in the cases in which they aimed to escape from, or object to, the very same gender culture. Another tactic was to write the critique in verse, or simply to phrase it in a very humoristic and ironic way.

Can somebody tell me how to get into the circle and milieu at NHH when 150 men tend to play cards in the cafeteria every day? Once upon a time I happened to play chess, but I think chess creates unity only between two. Chess is a nice game, which I hereby leave to the Russians! But to whom can we leave all those guys playing cards? Why not send them off to Nigeria!

Humor had the obvious effect of reducing or curtailing the female critique, at the same time as it helped to create a common space or ground for communication between the sexes. A humoristic tone invited, so to speak, the boys to reply, and thus engage in the debate on their own "macho" behavior.¹⁷³ Most of them took up a very defensive position, however. Not all of them, they argued, were checking out "chicks" every Saturday. Others carried a rather arrogant tone; "You anonymous girl, who has come to hate this school because somebody has come to pull the wool over your eyes. My simple advice is; think about what you do if you haven't done so before."¹⁷⁴ The female counter

¹⁶⁹ See for instance K7 (Nr. 1, 1972): 20 14.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Interview with former NHH-student (05.09.2000): 2.

¹⁷² *Bulle* (Nr. 9, 1968): 5 Citation in original: "Med den ene hånden i siden og med sigaretten i munnviken og med et overlegent kritisk blikk i øyet, går dere rundt og studerer hver jente nøye."

¹⁷³ *Bulle* (Nr. 9, 1968): 5; (Nr. 10, 1968): 5; (Nr. 21, 1968): 3.

¹⁷⁴ *Bulle* (Nr. 9, 1968): 5. Citation in original: "Du anonyme blant piker som NHH slett ikke liker. Du er bitterlig lurt og derfor reagerer så surt. Tenk over hva du gjør om du ei har gjort de før."

argument was that the traditional NHH-student, boasting around the place, was out of date. "Realize boy, your behavior is out of fashion", a girl wrote in 1969.¹⁷⁵

The rising number of girls at NHH revealed not only a very traditional milieu amongst the students. It also made clear that nobody at this state-owned school had thought of the possibility that not all students were male. Ann remembered, for example, that the papers received before admission kindly asked all new students to wear a black suit for the inauguration ceremony. It did not say: "dressing-code: black suit", which includes both men and women, but simply "black suit". Ann's solution to this practical problem was to write a letter to the administration, where she kindly asked if she – who in fact happened to be a girl – could dress in a national costume instead. Unsurprisingly, the management had no problems accepting this request, with the result that Ann dressed up in a traditional woman's way the first day, while all the boys were behaving like true men. Even so, the episode displays more than gender trivialities. On the contrary it illustrates what I would call the "unspoken" with respect to NHH's masculinity, which materialized in everything from the curriculum and admission procedures to the milieu and buildings. Women's entry, to a large extent, changed this. It contributed to making the invisible visible, but unlike the French challenge to the very same norm, it was running on a very small scale – primarily taking place among the students themselves.

Making Gender Visible

As the number of female graduates began to climb in the early 1970s, it became evident that the campus in Breiviken had very few references to – or facilities for – women. Even if it was built as late as in 1964, it contained, for example, far less female than male bathrooms. Female showers were another problem, a service that was more than vital since most students happened to live in private studios, without hot water. Male and female students were for this reason forced to make use of the same bathing facilities, consisting of 6 showers shared by approximately 1,000 students, though at different times. When Elisabeth commenced her studies in 1971, she had access to the showers only twice a week; on Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons, when the students'

¹⁷⁵ *Bulle* (Nr. 22, 1969): 3 Citation in original: "Hev kvaliteten, gutt – innse du har gått av moden."

association had its weekly meetings.¹⁷⁶ Finding this inequality very unfair, Elisabeth started to explore the possibility to create a woman's shower in one of the female restrooms. But unlike her female forerunners, her activism was everything but invisible. Nor was she very afraid of the limelight.

Shortly after she had been admitted to the school, Elisabeth, who was the first observable feminist at the school, initiated a petition for the female shower. The campaign, consisting of a big yellow flyer and a public appeal, created no immediate enthusiasm among the older girls, however. The fear of attention was, in Elisabeth's words, the main reason for this tepid response from her "equals". "But when the shower finally arrived, a few months later, nobody complained of course."¹⁷⁷ The radical male students on the other hand, embraced her activism, with the result that Elisabeth was asked to run for office with a group of socialists the following semester. In 1972, this group of devoted social democrats, gained power among the students at NHH; with the result that Elisabeth became vice-chairman.¹⁷⁸ And the following semester, her board decided to draft a collective resolution in the support of women's fight for liberation and equality with men, which was passed by a staggering majority:

NHHS voices its support for everybody working against female discrimination and exploitation, be this either within political parties or through other forms of organized work. We have to fight for a change of mentality among people on this issue.¹⁷⁹

It has to be said, though, that this was not the only political resolution made by the students' union in those days. As most institutions of higher learning, NHH underwent a prominent radicalization in the early 1970s. Social, as well as scholarly, issues were politicized, and the apolitical "gentleman's culture" was increasingly losing ground to the advantage of various political sub-groups on the left. This forced, for one thing, the more conventional or so-called conservative, students to articulate a non-socialist stand, even

¹⁷⁶ Interview with former NHH-student (19.12.2000): 6.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.: 7. Ole Berrefjord, the leader of the students' association, was the one to promote the cause before the Academic Senate.

¹⁷⁸ *Bulle* (Nr. 7, 1972): 17.

though many hesitated. "It must be possible to have some fun without necessarily turning everything into politics", a student wrote in *Bulle*, February 1973.¹⁸⁰ The reason for his utterance was the intense debate caused by the annual "Boys' Evening", which leftist students – male as female – had come to criticize in the students' newspaper; "There is a long tradition at NHH for turning girls into sexual objects by the use of nudes on posters and advertisements....but perhaps you need some naked 'flesh' to sell something as outdated as the 'Boys Evening'?"¹⁸¹

The "Boys' Evening" was, as the name indicates, an evening where boys were allowed to be boys, in which beer, pornography and male magazines were looked upon as the "natural" ingredients. As we saw in the foregoing chapter, the male students at HEC, to some of the girls' great indignation, also threw similar parties. At NHH, the critique encompassed far more than a few "angry girls", however. Actually, the chairman of the students' union spoke up against this practice several times. He criticized especially the boys' use of pornography, which in the opinion of the union leader had to be considered as a "step in the wrong direction".¹⁸² Radicalism was of course the general ideological background or even backbone for this critique. With the socialist victory among the students in 1972, which had replaced the previous "student-as-such" approach to politics with a more proactive "student-in-society" practice, the official gender discourse changed considerably to the advantage of women. According to the writings in the students' newspaper at the time, more and more men declared themselves as sympathizers of women's liberation, arguing that this also was in the interests of men.¹⁸³ A more gender-balanced society would, as one put it, "enable us to create a less competitive and 'careerist' environment".¹⁸⁴ Female liberation would in this sense also imply a "new man", which gives evidence of the articulation of a new masculinity at NHH, challenging, as well as coexisting, along the "happy male seducer".

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.: Citation in original: "NHHS uttaler sin støtte til alle som arbeider for å fjerne kjønnsdiskriminering og stoppe utbyttingen av kvinnene, enten det er innenfor politiske partier eller gjennom andre organisasjoner. Vi må skape en mentalitetsendring blant folk."

¹⁸⁰ *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1973): 3.

¹⁸¹ *Bulle* (Nr. 25, 1972): 10; (Nr. 23, 1973): 1, 7.

¹⁸² *Bulle* (Nr. 23, 1973): 2.

¹⁸³ See for instance *Bulle* (nr. 8, 1974): 10.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

The increasingly woman-friendly discourse should, at the same time, not prevent us from acknowledging the continuous difficulties that some of the female students faced at a more personal level. Several of the Norwegian interviewees told me that they felt both harassed and bullied by fellow male students, and that political or ideological convictions at this point had no extenuating effects. Male leftists appeared, in other words, to be just as sexist as the others. The radicalization never took on the same force at NHH as within certain faculties at the university, which tended to gag any opposition or exchange of ideas which went against the dominant Marxist discourse. The radical milieu at NHH held, for example, only a handful Marxist-Leninists, and the total number of "leftists" never surpassed the amount of so-called "blues" or conservatives.¹⁸⁵ The result of a ballot on the EC question, organized before the national referendum in November 1972, illustrates also this apparent political difference between regular university students and graduates of business. Whereas all other institutions of higher learning had strong anti-EC groups before the referendum, voting against Norwegian membership, the majority of NHH students wanted to take part in European economic cooperation. At NHH, 59% of the students were in favor of joining the EC, while university students were massively against it.¹⁸⁶

While the radicalization still contributed vastly in making gender more visible at NHH, it derived from the fact that the feminization turned into a kind of political capital for the leftist students, who lacked other and more precarious issues to fight. Seen in comparison with the average university student, the graduates were without doubt a very privileged group. Overcrowded lecturing halls, impersonal teaching and anonymous study conditions were never a real problem in Breiviken. A study program divided into shorter courses, and not one-year modules as was the case at the university, made it relatively easy to get through with the studies. The students also had rights of participation, long before the National Student Union brought student democracy on the agenda as a result of the international events during the spring of 1968.¹⁸⁷ "In several

¹⁸⁵ Interview with former NHH student (29.08.2001): 5.

¹⁸⁶ Danielsen, Rolv et al (1995): 440 – 441, *Bulle* (Nr. 7, 1972): 9. In real numbers, it was 336 for and 266 against. The result of the national referendum was 53, 5% "No".

¹⁸⁷ *Bulle* (Nr. 14, 1968): 1.

ways we already have the rights that other students currently are fighting for", one candidate wrote in *Bulle* after the happenings in Paris the same year;

...we already have representatives on most important panels and committees. We have our own student counselor, and last, but not least, we most often get a say too, while we seldom decide to give our opinion on an issue.¹⁸⁸

Consequently, there was not real need for "New-Left students" to fight the right of participation at NHH. Their political energy was used instead to criticize NHH's capitalist and male chauvinist norm. The student mentioned above initiated, for example, a socialist alternative to the graduates' association, the so-called "NSF for socialists", training workers in topics like industrial democracy.¹⁸⁹ Others fought what they saw as unconcealed elitism, while others declared their solidarity with women's liberation from male dominance. Even so, leftist support for the female newcomers was never enough to cope with the problems arising from being a minority, and thus "different" from the taken-for-granted male norm.

Female Solidarity – From Survival to Collective Action

The sociologist Elin Kvande has, in her study on female students of engineering at the Technical University of Norway (NTH), shown how solidarity developed as an important strategy for survival in a male-dominated milieu.¹⁹⁰ Female fellowships were, in her sociological terminology, an example of coping through compensatory activity. It created not only a buffer against a social setting dominated by men, and the underrating that often followed. As important, according to Kvande, were the psychological effects of it. By being together with women who faced the very same problems, important requirements for preservation and safeguarding were fulfilled. It developed, in other words, as a "strategy of survival".¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ *Bulle* (Nr. 22, 1968): 2. Citation in original: "Vi på NHH står på mange måter i en særstilling når det gjelder forholdene til kontakten med lærere og administrasjon. Vi har representanter i alle viktige utvalg og komiteer, vi har undervisningskonsulent og ikke minst, vi blir i stor grad hørt på i de få sakene vi uttaler oss om. På mange måter har vi allerede fått de rettighetene andre studenter nå arbeider for å få."

¹⁸⁹ *Bulle* (Nr. 6, 1972): 5. Norway introduced Industrial Democracy in 1972.

¹⁹⁰ Kvande, Elin (1985): 8 – 10.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*: 9.

At NHH, various forms of solidarity developed among the female business graduates in the early 1970s. One of the first signs of this emerging solidarity was a female inauguration ceremony, created in 1970 by a couple of students belonging to the 1969 set.¹⁹² Thought as the girls' answer to the fraternization among the boys, the ceremony had the effect that it introduced new and old female students to each other at the beginning of every academic year. Additionally, female fellowships or clubs were created on the level of the class. Both Lisa and Elisabeth confirmed the importance of the so-called "sewing circle", a club that still exists: "I can't remember how we met, but we definitely did so and continued to do so until this very day", Elisabeth recalled.¹⁹³ The female ties created were, in her opinion, indispensable in order to cope with a setting as different and male-dominated as the one they met in Bergen. Lisa said something very similar:

As you could imagine, we were of great importance for each other. We were very different, and continued to be so. But in order to handle a very male-dominated milieu, the companionship among us was extremely valuable.¹⁹⁴

These statements are interesting for at least two main reasons. Firstly, they put on show the psychological advantages of being among people who knew what it meant to be both "different" and in a minority. Through female bonds, the girls could exchange experiences and discuss strategies about "how to survive in such a macho milieu as the one we met at the NHH".¹⁹⁵ Secondly, the statement says something about the interconnection between personal experiences and identity formation. As Lisa explained it, the experience of belonging to a small minority, or a marginal group among men, made the girls stick together regardless of large individual and political differences. An indispensable result of this was that gender or womanhood became an important point of reference for the female students. This made female solidarity at NHH more than a strategy of survival. It also turned into an important part of their identity, which later

¹⁹² *Bulle* (Nr. 17, 1970): 16.

¹⁹³ Interview with former NHH student (19.12.2000): 10.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with former NHH student (16.08.2001): 2.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with former NHH student (19.12.2000): 10.

encouraged a conceptualization of gender as "difference", and not as "equality" or "similarity", as was the case among female students at HEC.

Of course, this conceptualization did not take place in a vacuum. Neither was it particularly specific for those attending the NHH. The rise of second-wave feminism, emphasizing women's liberation from male dominance instead of just equal opportunities or equality with men, had a major impact on the mobilization of female students. The women's liberation movement, triggered off by Jo Freeman's visit to Oslo in September 1970, was, nevertheless, a parallel process with the feminization of higher business education.¹⁹⁶ Actual interaction between the two is thus highly relevant for the aim of understanding how and why an increasing number of the female students, of whom many were conservative like the boys, identified with the neo-feminist line of "difference".

As the women's liberation movement emerged, the female NHH-students developed an increasingly more pro-active line. And again, Elisabeth operated behind the scenes. The Women's Group, created about one year after the campaign for the female shower, was more or less her idea: "In 1972, women were supposed to do such things. It was the time of the women's lib, but as you would imagine there was no feminist group at the NHH, so I thought we just had to make one." However, this time she had the support of many. Along with the declaration of the creation of the group, there was a common acknowledgment among the girls that women's position as a minority made female discrimination a key problem at the school:

NHH has traditionally been a school by and for men. But even though there was a cautious increase of female students in the last years' admission, there are still less than 6% girls at this place. From a marketing perspective, attention of this kind might serve as a comparative advantage. Human empathy proves, however, the opposite.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Lønnå, Elisabeth (1996): 238.

¹⁹⁷ *Bulle* (Nr. 18, 1973): 3 Citation in original: "Tradisjonelt er NHH-studiet en utdanning for menn. Opptaket de siste årene har imidlertid vist en svak økning av kvinnelige studenter. Men det store mindretallet av jenter, 6%, resulterer selvfølgelig i større oppmerksomhet fra miljøet. Ut i fra en 'markedsorientering' virker dette kanskje fordelsaktig? Menneskelig innlevelse vil rask vise et mer virkelig bilde."

Visibility was again a motivating factor. But the visibility, resulting from being a minority, made female discrimination a problem not only at the school. As important, the Women's Groups stated, were the challenges faced by the female civil economists after graduation, challenges that to a greater extent were related to being invisible on the labor market. Or, as the group put it in their statement:

Female civil economists are victims of discrimination. Companies are most likely to look for men, not women, when they decide to take on new employees. Additionally, we have to fight the more ordinary 'female problems' related to the combination of work, home and children. This acknowledgement made us create a Women's Group, open to all girls at the NHH.¹⁹⁸

The topics discussed during the first year displays that the female business graduates were preoccupied with many of the same issues that were being addressed by the growing number of neo-feminists in the early 1970s.¹⁹⁹ Female subordination and exploitation, pro-choice abortion, gender roles and job-sharing in the home, were natural ingredients of the debate within the group.²⁰⁰ It took also on some of the organizational characteristics of the women's liberation movement, such as a "flat" – or anti-hierarchical – structure and the practice of open meetings, with "consciousness-raising" or female "awakening" as key words. They organized various ad-hoc actions concerning birth control, and installed coin machines for both condoms and sanitary napkins in the female restrooms. The famous slogan that "the personal is also political" thus had considerable impact even at a school so predominantly "blue" – or conservative – as the NHH. Still, the Women's Group remained relatively modest compared to feminist organizations in general, by holding a so-called "nonpolitical" line. One reason for this was a pronounced strategy of including all the female students attending the school, regardless of their political color, even if some of its initiators happened to be part of other and far more

¹⁹⁸ *Bulle* (Nr. 18, 1973): 3 Citation in original: "Det er først og fremst som jobbsøkende siviløkonomer vi møter kvinnekrimineringen. Eksempelvis utlyste de fleste lenge under rubrikken 'Stilling ledig menn'. I tillegg kommer de alminnelige kvinneproblemene i forbindelse med yrke, hjem og barn. Erkjennelsen av dette førte til at en kvinnegruppe ble dannet i forrige semester. Gruppen er et forum for alle jenter ved NHH."

¹⁹⁹ The first neo-feminist group established in 1970, called the "Neo-feminists" (*Nyfeministene*).

²⁰⁰ *Bulle* (Nr. 18, 1973): 1.

radical or socialist feminists groups, like The Female Front (*Kvinnefronten*).²⁰¹ Or, as they put it themselves: “the Women’s Group is a politically independent forum primarily for girls with connections to the NHH. We aim at fighting gender discrimination and to improve the societal position of women at large.”²⁰²

The fractioning of the neo-feminist movement, starting in 1973, made it progressively more problematic for the Women’s Group to recruit new people, however. As feminism was increasingly associated with socialisms, and thus as a kind of class-based struggle against capitalism, many of the female newcomers turned their back on the feminist issue.²⁰³ “Capitalism is not the only reason for women’s subordination and socialism for sure is not a sufficient condition for gender equality”, a girl wrote in *Bulle* in 1974, rediscovering an old dilemma between socialism and feminism.²⁰⁴ The political impasse between class and gender became especially apparent in 1974, when a female student, who happened to take actively part in the Women’s Group, decided to run for leadership in the students’ union with a group of non-socialists.²⁰⁵ This put some of the most devoted feminists like Elisabeth in a tricky position. “As you would imagine, it developed into a kind of quarrel or heated discussion among some of us, on whether we ought to vote according to political color or gender”, she explained.²⁰⁶ Yet, this time the ballot went in the favor of the non-socialists. The woman running for office, and whose name was Wenche Berthelsen, happened to get 57, 7% of the votes, and thus managed to become the first female leader of the students’ association (NHHS).

Wenche was not elected because she was a woman, but because she has proved to be a student that had the courage of her convictions.... in times like these we can still not escape the fact that the result enables us to translate approved theories into action.²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ This organization was also established in 1972, but developed in an increasingly socialist direction in the years to come. Fractioning, and later break-up, was the result of this. Two new groups (Bread & Roses and the Clara-group) were established in 1975.

²⁰² *Bulle* (Nr. 7, 1974): 1. Citation in original: “Kvinnegruppa er et tverrpolitisk uavhengig forum, primært for jenter med tilknytning til NHH. Vi vil søke å bekjempe kjønnsdiskriminering og bedre kvinnes vilkår i samfunnet.”

²⁰³ *Bulle* (Nr. 27, 1974): 1.

²⁰⁴ *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1974): 1.

²⁰⁵ *Bulle* (Nr. 14, 1974): 9, interview with former NHH student (19.12.2000): 14.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

The victory of Wenche Berthelsen in 1974 gives evidence of an emerging recognition of female students at the NHH. A non-socialist woman in power in the students' union underscored, moreover, that feminism existed independently from socialism, and that the Women's Group was more than a "forum for socialists", to quote Berthelsen herself.²⁰⁸ Her ideological clarification concerning feminism helped, to a large extent, to fight the emerging falling away from the Women's Group. In the next year, the group focused less on some of the larger political questions concerning women's liberation to the advantage of local problems and policy making. The reorientation materialized in an outspoken ambition to increase the number of female applicants to the school, with the aim of better integrating women in higher managerial and administrative positions.²⁰⁹ This meant that the Women's Group continued to recruit new members, even if the support for the New Left, but also feminism, was fading considerably within the confines of the school. Many of the girls who happened to join the group in the coming years, were therefore not politically active in the more traditional sense of the word "political". Rather, they were what we can call politically conscious about their own possibilities and opportunities as women: One of my interviewees – Carina – said the following:

I decided to join the Women's Group because I was very concerned about women and higher education, not because I was politically active..... I always wanted a type of training that enabled me to earn money. To be honest, I never understood why moneymaking was reserved for 'the boys'. So in that respect I was very ambitious on behalf of myself and other women.²¹⁰

Institutional Responses to Women's Issues

In order to achieve the ambition of increasing the number of female students in higher business education, two ways, in particular, were employed. Firstly, the Women's Group started a recruitment campaign consisting of the brochure "NHH – for boys only?", which later changed name into "NHH – also for girls!", and which contained information about the school's program, housing facilities, and entry requirements etc. The brochure

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ *Bulle* (Nr. 27, 1974): 1.

²⁰⁹ ANNH, *Rapport fra Jentekampanjen ved NHH 1981/82* (Mai 1982): 1.

targeted female pupils in upper-secondary education, and was distributed to institutions of upper-secondary education around the country.²¹¹ Secondly, the group intervened at the level of the Academic Senate, demanding a general improvement of the status of women at NHH, and within society at large. This intervention was at first confined to the recruitment campaign. The printing and distributing of the brochures around the country was a costly affair. However, through financial support from one of the school's many reserve funds, that raised by the old "Society for a business school in Bergen", the brochure was printed and dispatched to hundreds of schools around the country.²¹² About 12,000 reprints were made each year, and the money allocated by the Academic Senate even enabled some of the group members to travel on so-called "lecturing tours".²¹³ Lisa told me during her interview that she had promoted the school several times. Even after graduation she kept up the activism for the cause.

When I left the school, in order to start my first job as a high-school teacher in Vesterålen [North of Norway], I happened to take with me some brochures. I used them quite a lot in fact, and after the first year four pupils from my school were selected for admission at the NHH, of whom three were girls, a result that I was extremely proud of. We sort of did what we could to recruit more girls, and I do think it made a difference.²¹⁴

Carina affirmed, to a large extent, a similar commitment:

We had a common focus relating to the aim of getting more women into higher education, managerial positions and the business labor market in general. We argued that it was important to motivate girls to get a professional training and not only side with their husbands. In order to communicate this message we traveled around and spoke about the NHH to female pupils.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ Interview with former NHH student (05.07.2001): 1, 3.

²¹¹ *Bulle* (Nr. 2, 1975): 9, interviews with former NHH students and *Rapport fra jentekampanjen ved NHH 1981/1982*, written by Karen Sofie Halleraker (May 1982).

²¹² ANNH, Sak K 21/74 (h) (referate fra Kollegiemøte 25.01.1974); Sak K 24/76 (Kollegiemøte 03.02.1976); Sak K 247/76 (Kollegiemøte 19.10.1976); Sak K 337/76 (Kollegiemøte 16.12.1976); Sak K 40/78 (Kollegiemøte 16.02.1978); Sak K 8/79 (Kollegiemøte 16.01.1979); Sak K 15/80 (Kollegiemøte 01.02.1980); Sak K 190/80 (Kollegiemøte 16.12.1980); Sak K 160/81 (Kollegiemøte 13.10.1981); Sak K 181/81 (Kollegiemøte 17.11.1981); Sak K 147/82 (Kollegiemøte 26.10.1982); Sak K 60/83 (Kollegiemøte 26.04.1983); Sak K 161/83 (Kollegiemøte 25.10.1983).

²¹³ *Bulle* (Nr. 2, 1976): 9.

²¹⁴ Interview with former NHH student (16.08.2001): 5.

²¹⁵ Interview with former NHH student (05.07.2001): 3.

The feminists' contacts with the Academic Senate took soon on a more challenging tone, however. In 1976, the women's group demanded the use of affirmative action in order to speed up female recruitment, at the same time as it decided to clamp down on any practices slowing down the emerging feminization.²¹⁶ The rule which gave additional points to candidates who had done the national service before entrance, was particularly criticized.²¹⁷ A policy of this kind was to the advantage of boys, the group argued, and so similar points should be given to housewives. The appeal to the Academic Council was therefore clear: housework should be valued the same as military service, or compulsory civilian national service, as long as the work could be documented and was of more than three months duration.

Housework has long had low or no status regarding qualification for higher education. It's time to re-evaluate this kind of work, and to make it relevant for peoples' opportunities and chances on the labor market in general.²¹⁸

How did the Academic Council react to this?

As in most Western-Countries, the women's liberation movement made politicians and public authorities increasingly aware of questions relating to sexual discrimination. The legal and institutional response to this demand took, however, a different path in Norway than in France, in the sense that it did more than conferring equal rights or chances (*égalité de chances*) for men and women.²¹⁹ In Norway, it also contained an explicit ambition to "improve the position of women" by the use of affirmative action or "positive discrimination" of women in relation to male-dominated areas of work and higher education.²²⁰ Paragraph 3 in the Equal Status Act, passing the Norwegian parliament in 1978, formalized this legally: "different treatment of men and

²¹⁶ Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 332.

²¹⁷ *Bulle* (Nr. 2, 1976): 9, 13.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 13. Citation in original: "Praksis i heimen har i lang tid vært negativ vurdert i og med at det ikke har vært regnet som relevant ved søknad til for eksempel videre studier. Vi mener at det er på sin plass med en oppvurdering av arbeid i heimen, slik at denne praksisen teller på lik linje med andre yrker."

²¹⁹ Laufer, Jacqueline & Eirinn Larsen (20003).

²²⁰ *Lov av 9. juni 1978 nr. 45 om likestilling mellom kjønnene*: § 1, Lovens formål, in Bystydzienksi, Jill M. (1995): 194 – 195, Teigen, Mari (2003): 11.

women that furthers gender equality is not in conflict with the law".²²¹ As far as higher education is concerned, this made it possible to favor female applicants for admission to male-dominated professions and training, in so far as it would contribute to decreasing the gender gap in the long run.²²²

As a public institution, NHH was obliged to make comments on the preparation of the Equal Status Act. But unlike most universities and colleges, the school had no official gender policy when the proposed law was thrust into the public limelight in the autumn of 1974.²²³ The dispatch from the Ministry of Church and Education, concerning the forthcoming law, encouraged instead the creation of an ad-hoc gender-equality group, led by Professor Thorolf Rafto.²²⁴ This meant that Rafto nominated the committee members, but the procedure soon showed itself to be for the benefit of the Women's Group.²²⁵ The selected members took all actively part in the Women's Group, which perhaps also helps to explain why the final report only to a small extent deviated from the official draft. Paragraph 3, which caused intense debate and controversies within and among political parties, primarily between socialists and non-socialists, passed through the Academic Senate with stoic calm.²²⁶ "In so far as women and men currently have different points of

²²¹ Teigen, Mari & Ragnhild Steen Jensen (1995): 55 (own translation). Paragraph 6 specified this further in relation to higher education.

²²² Ibid.: 17. Paragraph 6. A similar practice had earlier been used to increase the number of male primary-school teachers. See Ida Blom (1999): 309 – 310 and Gro Hagemann (1992).

²²³ ANNH, Letter from the principal of NHH, Olav Harald Jensen, to the Committee on Gender Equality at the University of Bergen dated the 16th of April 1974, on request from Assistant Professor Ida Blom the 26th of March the same year, confirms this

²²⁴ ANHH, Letter from the Ministry of Church and Education, dated the 23.08.1974, *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1974): 1, 8.

²²⁵ ANHH, K 194/74 *Untalelse vedrørende 'Utkast til lov om likestilling'* (30.09.1974). Rafto, who has to be defined as a true liberal, had got in contact with the Women's Group through a seminar called "A-seminar" in business economics. As result of the increasing interest in women's issues among some of the students, Rafto in cooperation with some other professors decided to include the topic in the graduate seminars held in the last semester. Several students thus wrote seminar papers on feminist issues: See for instance: Jorunn Dombu & Grete Aasland Grotmol: "Kvinnelige siviløkonomer i dagens norske samfunn. En empirisk undersøkelse blant kvinnelige siviløkonomer og deres roller og konflikter i arbeids- og familiesituasjon" (Bed.øk. seminar, NHH høst 1974), Elisabeth Dokka & Marit Büch-Holm: "Kvinnelige NHH-studenters holdninger til studiet, arbeid og familieliv" (Bed.øk. seminar, NHH høst 1974).

²²⁶ ANHH, Letter from the rector at NHH to the Ministry of Church and Education, dated the 2nd of October 1974. In the first draft of the Equal Status Act, affirmative action was mentioned in paragraph 2, not 3. The Academic Senate passed the draft of the group without any further comments. For more on the political controversy on the use of affirmative action in Norway, see Hege Skjeie (1992), Mari Teigen (2003).

departure, different treatment of men and women can be a necessary step so as to create actual equality between the sexes."²²⁷

Following the consultative round on the Equal Status Act, the Secretary General of Norwegian University Rectors recommended a closer discussion of the issue within institutions of higher learning.²²⁸ Education was, in line with the authorities' thinking, a key instrument for societal changes regarding gender. The Academic Senate at the NHH was for this reason asked to create a more permanent group, consisting of democratically-elected representatives from the staff and students.²²⁹ The outcome of this was a new committee, a so-called Panel for Gender Equality, approved of by the Academic Senate in February 1975, which was to elaborate the concern for equality further.²³⁰ The final report, submitted to the Secretary General of Norwegian University Rectors in May the same year, argued for the importance of affirmative action, although they had problems accepting female quotas at the time.²³¹ The basic argument was that a quota system which ensured a fair distribution between the sexes, required additional resources to supervise unqualified women: "It's currently up to the individual woman to qualify in accordance with the prevailing admission rules..."²³²

A few months later, the administration was to deviate from this rule: from the academic year 1975/76 onwards, NHH began to practice preferential treatment of female applicants when they were as equally qualified as the men, due to what they identified as

²²⁷ ANHH, K 194/74 *Uttaleles vedrørende 'Utkast til lov om likestilling'* (30.09.1974):1, Citation in original: "Kvinner og menn har i dag to forskjellige utgangspunkt, derfor kan det være nødvendig at det ene kjønn i enkelte tilfeller forskjellbehandles for at reell likestilling kan oppnås."

²²⁸ ANNH, Letter from the principal of the University of Oslo, on behalf of the General Secretary of Norwegian University Rectors, dated the 9th of December 1974.

²²⁹ ANHH, K 113/75 (Kollegiemøtet): *Svar på Innstilling nr. 1 fra Likestillingskomiteen ved Universitetet i Bergen* (02.04.1975).

²³⁰ ANHH, K 113/75, *Uttalelse fra Kollegiet ved NHH* (02.04.1975).

²³¹ ANHH, Letter to the Secretary General of the Norwegian Rectors from the headmaster of NHH, Olav Harald Jensen, dated the 5th of May 1975.

²³² ANNH, K 113/75: *Uttalelse vedrørende likestilling sendt Likestillingskomiteen ved Universitetet i Bergen* (02.04.1975): 5 Citation in original: "I dag er det opp til den individuelle kvinne å kvalifisere seg under de nåværende betingelser." Within the Norwegian gender-equality tradition, affirmative action measures are presented and talked about under the headlines 'moderate' and 'radical' action. Until 1995, when affirmative action for men was included in the Equal Status Act, 'moderate' affirmative action meant that preferential treatment was given to women when they were equally qualified. Employing a 'radical' version, however, meant that preferential treatment was given to women in any case. The latter form has only to a small extent been employed (CEPES – *Unesco: Multilingual Lexicon of Higher Education*, 1993: 157).

a very high defection rate among the female students who were selected for admission.²³³ This enabled 5 out of 30 female students to be accepted on a lower point scale than the those in 1975, something that resulted in 20% more female students, a result that in the words of *Bulle* “has to be seen as nothing but positive”.²³⁴ The Academic Senate later accepted the practice as a permanent rule, under pressure from the Women’s Group and the Panel of Gender Equality:

Female applicants have first priority if all applicants, male and female, sharing the same amount of points (sum total of points earned during final exam in gymnasium/economic gymnasium and eventual additional points) can not be selected for admission.²³⁵

According to the wording used, NHH was to practice a very moderate preferential treatment of female applicants, in so far as they had to fulfill the same official requirements for admission. In addition, the Academic Senate decided to accept the appeal from the Women’s Group concerning housework as a merit. This put household tasks and mothering on equal footing with military service/civilian national service, on the condition that the applicant could prove family responsibilities and full-time commitment to the home.²³⁶ But whereas few had problems accepting equality treatment of the sexes, and thus an equalization of so to speak “mothers” and “soldiers”, differential treatment of women as a means towards gender equality was harder to swallow.

Unlike the motion for recognition of housework as a merit, the bill for affirmative action was not carried unanimously. One representative refrained from voting, and two of the 6 appointed members of the Senate voted against the bill, of which one was a male student representative. He objected to differential treatment on “the grounds that it is illogical to promote gender equality through discriminatory means. All applicants are

²³³ *Bulle* (Nr. 23, 1975): 8. Only 30 of the 56 female students being selected for admission happened to accept.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ ANHH, Kollegiemøte 09.03.1976, Jensen, Olav Harald & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 331, *Bulle* (Nr. 22, 1978): 3 Citation in original: “Dersom det ikke er mulig å ta opp alle søkere med samme antall opptakspoeng (sum av poeng til eksamen artium/økonomisk gymnas og evt. tilleggspoeng) skal kvinnelige søkere opptas først.”

²³⁶ *Bulle* (Nr. 8, 1976): 2.

individuals, and should subsequently be treated the same".²³⁷ The procedure of differential treatment, to achieve a more balanced composition of individuals according to a group characteristic like gender, was in his opinion illogical as well as illegitimate. Everybody had to compete in accordance to individual merits. But despite this liberal-democratic objection from a male student, gender was never to be a dividing line in the debate on affirmative action among the students. As a matter of fact, the resolution caused ire and anger among female as male students, as well as the persistent support of others.

'The Affirmative Action Controversy' among the Students

Shortly after it was announced that affirmative action procedures were to be used during admission for the academic year 1975/76, the critique began to rain down in the students' weekly.²³⁸ The new policy, which basically secured a very cautious preferential treatment of female applicants in order to decrease the gender gap in the field, was attacked and criticized for primarily two highly interrelated reasons: On the one hand, positive discrimination of female applicants was a violation of the principle of formal justice.²³⁹ "The aim is equal opportunities, which means that we [the girls] want to be treated on the same level as the boys, with regard to both admission to the NHH and future employment".²⁴⁰ The second reason related more to the unintentional consequences of preferential treatment on the basis of sex:

Such practices call the qualifications of girls into question, which does not favor gender equality in general....A quantitative approach to gender equality can hardly lead to a more just recognition of women in society.²⁴¹

²³⁷ *Bulle* (Nr. 23, 1978): 6 Citation in original: "Min begrunnelse er ganske enkelt at det er ulogisk å fremme likestilling ved diskriminering. Det er enkeltindivider som søker ved NHH, og som sådan bør de behandles likt."

²³⁸ *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1975): 6; (Nr. 25, 1975): 12, (Nr. 27, 1975): 9, (Nr. 10, 1976): 6.

²³⁹ Mari Teigen's (2003) study on affirmative action and controversies in the Norway has been very useful when analyzing this debate.

²⁴⁰ *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1975): 12 Citation in original: "Det er likestilling vi vil ha, dvs. vi vil bli behandlet på lik linje med guttene, både når vi skal søke opptak ved NHH, og når vi siden skal søke arbeid."

This latter argument, articulated by a female student, combines a liberal justice approach with a more utilitarian concern about the negative effects of affirmative action in the long run.²⁴² Selection on the basis of merit was, in her words, the only valid way of screening future students: "There is no reason to admit a girl who doesn't fulfill the official requirement."²⁴³ This statement shows in many ways that meritocratic rules of exclusion not only are based on the ideology of individual achievement. It also says that the underlying notion of equality is equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome as the ethical justification of affirmative action. A merit system does not assume this; only that those social inequalities being produced are distributed more fairly, according to individual intelligence and accomplishment.²⁴⁴

The advocates of affirmative action at the NHH used a different scale or parameter of justice than their antagonists.²⁴⁵ Instead of talking about formal justice and unintended consequences, they had all a tendency to talk about justice and responsibility in terms of society; "A more gender balanced society has to be consider as a societal duty"²⁴⁶, and to stress the more positive consequences of preferential treatment of women over a shorter period of time: "Affirmative action is a valid instrument for accelerating a process that has already begun, with the overall aim of making men and women into true equals" in the long run.²⁴⁷ The counter argument that preferential treatment would lead to deprivation and decline within the field was also said to be false. The official requirements for admission to the NHH had a tendency to change from year to year without making the "civil economists" better or worse for that sake. "One has besides four years to prove (or disprove) that one can handle this program of men."²⁴⁸ By saying

²⁴¹ *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1975): Citation in original: "Man vil trekke jenters kvalifikasjoner i tvil, og det bidrar ikke til likestilling kvantitativ likestilling for enhver pris kan vanskelig føre til at kvinnene blir betraktet som likeverdige".

²⁴² Teigen, Mari (2003): 48.

²⁴³ *Bulle* (Nr. 24, 1975): 6 Citation in original: "Kan ikke en jente fylle opptakskravene, bør hun heller ikke slippe inn."

²⁴⁴ Ball, Stephen J. (2003): 20.

²⁴⁵ *Bulle* (Nr. 27, 1975): 12, (Nr. 27, 1975): 9; (Nr. 10, 1976): 6.

²⁴⁶ *Bulle* (nr. 27, 1975): 12. Citation in original: "Det må ses som et samfunnsansvar at vi får en rimelig kjønnsfordeling."

²⁴⁷ *Bulle* (Nr. 27, 1975): 9 Citation in original: "kjønnskvoltering er et aktuelt virkemiddel for å påskynde prosessen som foregår, for at kvinner og menn reelt skal betraktes som likeverdige".

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Citation in original: "Dessuten har man hele studietiden til å bevise (ev. motbevise) at man behersker studiet laget av menn."

this, the justifiers showed that they had reservations about the merit system and the belief that future contributions were truly dependent on prior achievements: But inscribed in this critique was also the acknowledgement that traditional selection had a tendency towards favoring men. This was a continuation of the idea that the male norm was incompatible with women, and that the merit system forced women to compete for admission on men's premises.

An interesting outcome of this latter stand is that it implied a notion of gender as "difference", instead of one of "equality" or "similarity", which was maintained by the defenders of meritocracy: as one said: "the aim of women's liberation is not to make her a second copy of the man." And it was in many ways this line of reasoning, nourished by the women's liberation movement, that served as the basis for the use of affirmative action at NHH and in other societal institutions. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of "difference" never gained the same legitimacy at NHH as it did within other spheres of society. The suggestion of the Women's Group to introduce female quotas in 1978, after identifying a careful decline in the feminization from 20% to 16 – 17%, was, for instance, heavily criticized by fellow students.²⁴⁹ And many of the antagonists were once again women, who held that female quotas were humiliating and degrading for those they concerned.²⁵⁰

However, the strongest opponents of the motion were still male students, who branded it as a discriminatory act at its worse.²⁵¹ Rather than preventing discrimination between the sexes, it contributed to a discrimination of men. "People tend to apply for the NHH because they want to, not because they happen to be born 'with' or 'without'."²⁵² Female quotas would have the ultimate consequence that the school would take on considerable fewer male students, which in their opinion was not only unfortunate but also unfair, if they proved to be the best during the selection. The Women's Group was sure of its ground, however. Women's politics was a priority in Norway that year. As the Gender Equality Act passed through Parliament, the government authorities confirmed their intentions of working for a better distribution of power among men and women

²⁴⁹ *Bulle* (Nr. 21, 1978): 1, 6; (Nr. 22, 1978): 3. This decline was in reality less: according to official statistics, it went down from 21.3% to 19.3%, not from 20% to 16 – 17% (ANHH: *Opptak til siviløkonomstudiet 1983, oversikt over antall jenter i siviløkonomstudiet de siste årene*).

²⁵⁰ *Bulle* (Nr. 23, 1978): 9 – 10.

²⁵¹ *Bulle* (Nr. 23, 1978): 6; (Nr. 24, 1978): 5, 7.

within public institutions according to the 40/60 rule.²⁵³ This political imperative or obligation provided the feminists at NHH with the legitimacy to continue on, despite immense critique from fellow students. On the 14th of October 1980, the group arranged a public meeting devoted the issue of female quotas, in cooperation with the board of the students' union.²⁵⁴ And two weeks later, the students' union arranged a ballot on the use of female quotas during admission, with the aim of intervening in relation to the Academic Senate. However, they never got this far.

The result of the election showed a clear opposition, if not hostility, against the positive discrimination of women.²⁵⁵ The defeat was in fact so strong that even noted conservatives were surprised by the result.²⁵⁶ Various pieces in *Bulle* after the election indicate that the séance had provoked intense discussions between the Women's Group and the "others". Whereas the girls felt abandoned by the school community, due to the negative result, representatives of the majority accused the Women's Group, as well as their policy, of being emotionally charged. This patronizing attitude contributed to reducing the feminist action to one of emotionalism, which unsurprisingly had the consequence that Women's Group suffered a blow.²⁵⁷ Never again were the students at NHH to vote over the use of affirmative action in a plenary meeting, and never again was the discrepancy between public policy making and institutional practices to be so strongly articulated. The school's official answer to the Ministry of Consumption and Administration in December 1980, when it was asked to consider the use of female quotas had, therefore, firm support in the student population:

Seen in the light of the positive development taken place lately, we find it unnecessary to introduce female quotas at this point of time. It seems in fact reasonable to presume that the process that has caused this growth [of female students] will carry it on further, meaning that the only gain of quotas would be in terms of speed.²⁵⁸

²⁵² *Bulle* (Nr 23, 1978): 6.

²⁵³ The Norwegian parameter of parity is, unlike the French, set to 40/60, not 50/50.

²⁵⁴ *Bulle* (Nr. 19, 1980): 4.

²⁵⁵ *Bulle* Nr. 21, 1980): 26.

²⁵⁶ *Bulle* (nr. 21, 1980): 29.

²⁵⁷ This made the group turn more to campaigning.

²⁵⁸ ANNH, K 180/ 80, Letter from the NHH to the Ministry of Consumption and Administration, dated the 9th of December 1980 Citation in original: "I lys av den positive utviklingen som har funnet sted, virker det

The principle of a cautious preferential treatment of female applicants, applied when men and women were equally qualified, survived until 1993.²⁵⁹ So did the Women's Group's emphasis on female recruitment. The enrollment offensive "The Girls' Campaign", starting off in 1981, grew in many ways out of the defeat over "radical" affirmative action in 1980. But, unlike prior campaigns, it put an increasing effort into public relations, hoping that this – in addition to the brochures and the lectures – would help to speed up the entry of women into higher business education and management.²⁶⁰

Concluding Remarks

"Collective action on the part of the women's movement has caused a partial transformation of Norwegian society", Suzanne Stiver Lier and Mari Teigen wrote in the 1994 *World Yearbook of Higher Education*. This rather optimistic remark, about the interconnection between collective action and societal progress, is not a rare case. Both feminist scholars and social scientists, in general, have had a strong tendency to emphasize the political power of Norwegian women through the impact of the rhetoric of "difference" on public policy making.²⁶¹ This chapter has shown that positive response to women's issues was not confined to specific institutions or environments. Also milieus of the more "conventional" type, like the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) in Bergen, were increasingly attentive to – and focused on – issues related to gender equality throughout the 1970s. For instance, the decision to practice preferential treatment of female applicants, even if it was qualified, illustrates a growing recognition of gender as "difference" at NHH throughout the 1970s. This recognition was still more noticeable in the beginning of the decade than towards the end, as women's progress into the field coincided with the women's liberation movement,

på oss lite rimelig å gjennomføre kvotering nå. Vi må kunne gå ut fra at de prosesser som har fremkalt denne utviklingen, vil kunne drive den videre frem, slik at det man i beste fall vinner ved kvotering, er en økning i hastighet."

²⁵⁹ The introduction of collective, and not individual, admission to institutions of higher education in 1994 made it increasingly difficult to maintain differential treatment measurements on the level of the school. NHH practiced the rule until 1993.

²⁶⁰ ANNH, *Rapport fra jentekampanjen ved NHH 1981/82* (mai 1982).

²⁶¹ Hernes, Helga (1987), Siim, Birte (1990); (1993), Kvande, Elin (1998).

which shored up the female students' subjective experiences of being "different" with a general theory of female liberation from male domination.

The connection or link between public policy making and subjective experiences of gender is, in many ways, apparent at the NHH. Unlike the French girls entering HEC in 1973, who gained legitimacy from a formal decision taken by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce as much as through an explicit elite-school culture, there was nothing to lean on as a woman at NHH in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This made the feminization of NHH strikingly more personalized or "lived" (*expérience vécu*) than the feminization of the HEC, and the women's liberation movement equally more important as a reservoir of coping strategies for the girls. But as the number of female students began to rise, it became gradually more difficult to maintain the presumption of the existence of common interests among women, based on the idea of gender-specific experiences. The debate following the declaration of affirmative action as a legal practice in 1975, exhibits that there was no social or political consensus regarding either gender or gender equality within the milieu. So does the result from the ballot on female quotas in 1978, which illustrates the old tension between "equality" and "difference" within the field.

Throughout the period, gender as "difference" was highly contested at NHH. The collective action carried out by the Women's Group never managed to displace some of its key middle-class ideals and values, like competitive individualism, meritocracy and freedom of choice. The social-democratic notion of equality, acting and speaking on behalf of the collective, seems, therefore, never to have gained a foothold within the community at NHH, nor the community it aimed at serving; i.e. private business.²⁶² Rather, its students and staff maintained or upheld liberal-democratic ideals, like the CCIP did in respect to the HEC, where respect for the individual and personal initiative and achievement were at the center. Differential treatment on behalf of a group characteristic, like gender, breaks – as we have seen in Chapter 9 – fundamentally with this ideal. The speech held by the bank executive and *siviløkonom* Aase Gudding Gresvig

²⁶² Østerud, Øyvind, Fredrik Engelstad & Per Selle (2003): 178. According to the *Norwegian Power and Democracy Report* (2003), businessmen and managers are the ones who disapprove most of the use of affirmative action in Norway. 83% of the women asked supported affirmative action, while only 46% of the men did the same.

in 1984, the first woman to lecture in the commemoration of Kristofer Lehmkuhl, is in that regard very telling.²⁶³

My point of departure in the debate on women and management has to be equal qualifications – equal contributions. When I say 'equal' I mean equal as a starting point for true competition – the best will always advance.²⁶⁴

Apparently, the individual, not women, served as the NHH-graduate's point of departure, even if she happened to be a woman herself.

²⁶³ *Kvinner og lederrollen*, Kristofer Lehmkuhl Forelesning holdt av Aase Gudding Gresvig, 26. september 1984, Norges Handelshøyskole, Bergen.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 18 Citation in original: "Mitt grunnlagspoeng for debatten om flere kvinner i lederstillinger må være like kvalifikasjoner – lik innsats. Når jeg sier lik mener lik som utgangspunkt for reell konkurranse – de beste går videre."

Conclusion

The masculine is to be found in the taken-for-granted – dressed as ‘the individual’.

M. Teigen¹

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Gender in French and Norwegian Business Education

Having presented these two courses of history in the foregoing chapters, it is time to return to the research question posed in the introduction: what was the importance of masculinity – or gender in general – in the processes of professionalization and elite-construction within the French and Norwegian fields of higher business education? As we have seen over the last two-three hundred pages, there is no straightforward answer to this issue. Still, it seems evident that the comparative-historical approach enables us to get beyond apparent cultural paradoxes, such as, for instance, the current lack of women in Norwegian management. Despite its strong reputation as a forerunner of gender equality, women held only 5, 2% of the executive positions and 9, 4% of the middle-management positions in Norway in 1997.² Indeed, compared to other western countries, which have as many women in wage earning work as Norway, these figures are very low.³ The very same year in France, for instance, 30% of intermediate managerial positions were held by women, according to Jacqueline Laufer and Anne Foquet, whereas

¹ Teigen, Mari (2003): 32 Citation in original: “Det mannlige gjenfinnes i det selvsagte – i det individuelle.”

² Raaum, Nina C. (1997): 7. The numbers are developed from statistics held by the Norwegian Confederation of Business and Industry (NHO). These numbers also correspond very well with the elite survey conducted by the “Norwegian Power-and Democracy Report, 1998 – 2003” (*Makt- og demokratiutredningen*), showing that women make up only 5% of the Norwegian business elite. See Trygve Gulbrandsen (2002): 49 and Øyvind Østerud, Fredrik Engelstad & Per Selle (2003).

³ Vianello, Mino & Gwen Moore (eds. 2000): 284.

the percentage of women at the very top was more in line with the Norwegian situation, running at 7%.⁴

The gender gap in Norwegian management has often been presented as a “paradox” of gender equality.⁵ Social scientists like Elin Kvande have even come to use the characteristic “the Norwegian paradox” to depict the Norwegian situation with regard not only to other countries, but also in relation to its own gender-equality policies and the actual percentage of its political and administrative elite that are women.⁶ Since the early 1980s, Norway has become internationally known for having many women in political positions. Only Sweden seems to give a similar – if not a stronger – impression of being a “woman-friendly” society than Norway, where citizenship, wage earning and care of the citizen are successfully reconciled within a welfare state of social-democratic origins.⁷

The work presented in this dissertation suggests an alternative interpretation of the lack of women in Norwegian business management. Instead of seeing it as a question or as a paradox of gender equality, the managerial gap has to be studied in relation to the institutional and cultural context of business management, and the importance of specific historical experiences for the social construction of gender. In other words, the disparity between the managerial elite and the political and administrative elite, regarding the representation of women, cannot be interpreted as being the result only of the last 30 years of debate and policy reforms on gender equality. It is also a consequence of a more than 100-year-long process and attempts to professionalize within the field of business administration. The institutions and graduates of higher business learning were important and forceful historical actors within this field. And it is their strategies and practices this last and concluding chapter aims at capturing – because it appears that the ways in which they operated, and also the social and political fields in which they acted, were quite different in France and Norway.

⁴ Laufer, Jacqueline & Anne Foquet (1997), Laufer, Jacqueline & Eirinn Larsen (2002): 801 – 802.

⁵ Kvande, Elin & Bente Rasmussen (1993), Kvande, Elin (1998), Birkelund, Gunn Elisabeth & Trond Pettersen (2003), Skjeie, Hege & Mari Teigen (2003).

⁶ See in particular Elin Kvande (1998).

⁷ Hernes, Helga (1997), Lewis, Jane (ed. 1993), Siim, Birte (1990); (1993).

Institutional Experiences of Gender in Higher Business Education

The "European" business schools were initially set up to educate future businessmen and clerks in one and the same institution. In this way, they covered, or sought to recruit, both the new social-professional segment, i.e. the white-collar workers, and the independent and well-off commercial bourgeoisie. But along with the democratization of upper-secondary education and the feminization of office work, a clearer bifurcation between professional and vocational training was needed *if* the business schools were to train anything but office workers, and thus provide their male students with a professional identity. This made the exclusion of women an essential aspect of the business schools' successful evolution in most European countries. Needless to say, business was anything but a codified knowledge in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and moneymaking had, moreover, definite moral implications. Both in France and in Norway, but in fact in other European countries too, men of the political and intellectual elite often looked upon businessmen with the deepest distrust. Creating a professional identity, which middle-class status was increasingly dependent upon, hence was easier said than done. Indeed, it was a true challenge, which invited the business community to make use of alternative and highly gendered strategies in launching the business schools. That means that even if the business occupations did not possess the necessary qualifications in order to become a proper profession, such as a knowledge base, they still acted professionally, even if this identity rested on masculinity and not on the so-called professional rules of the games.

Barring women turned out to be essential for the French and Norwegian business schools' professional reputation and social status in the twentieth century, when office work and upper-secondary education in general were increasingly "invaded" by young, unmarried women. None of those schools which were created for women or used by women in the early 1900s managed to become what we can call providers of top-managers in the long run. All the same, the histories of the most successful providers of higher business education in France and Norway, such as the École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) and the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), including its institutional forerunner the Christiania Commercial

Gymnasium (CHG), show that the ways in which the masculine outlook was preserved or maintained, differed not only across place and institutions, but also time.⁸

Within the period 1870s – 1970s, the institutional patterns and arrangement of this exclusion were never the same with respect to the above-mentioned business schools: the major dividing lines in the exclusionary practices were between *explicit* and *implicit*, but there was also a difference in the ways in which the barring policies and/ or structures were legitimized (Table 2). Whereas some were *institutional*, making gender the official reason for the exclusion of female applicants, others were largely more *functional*, and thus more in line with the gender-neutral rules of professionalization. Of course, neither of these alternatives excluded the other. The different strategies, and thus also the different institutional structures in the field, most often coexisted. What is still notable about the findings is that they never overlapped, neither in time nor place, between the French and the Norwegian cases. The framework listed below shall, therefore, be understood as an analytical tool to guide the findings listed below, rather than an absolute model of the ways masculinity was maintained in certain French and Norwegian business schools in the period 1870 – 1980.

⁸ Larsen, Eirinn (2003a & b).

Table 2: Strategies for preserving the business schools' masculine outlook; 1870s – 1970s

Varieties of female exclusion	Institutional (1)	Functional (2)
Explicit*:	Strategy / Structure A Women are excluded from the business schools because of their sex, and thus educated in separate institutions when needed: gender is the official reason for the female exclusion and the male – female split	Strategy / Structure B Men and women need different skills because they are to fill different positions in the business firm: the different function of men and women in the business firm is the official reason for the male – female split, and thus also the female exclusion
Implicit ☒:	Strategy / Structure C Women have formal access to the “male” business schools, but the “female” institutions of business training are not abolished, and /or the girls tend to make use the “male” institutions for other reasons than the men do. There is thus a tendency to continue “excluding” the girls from the type of work and positions the “male” business schools qualifies one for, as long as the norms and values shaping women’s /men’s practices do not change: the male norm, but also the male – female split, is reproduced through institutions, structures and men’s/women’s own values, mentalities and behavior, yet presented as gender neutral	Strategy / Structure D The skills/knowledge base of the business schools is linked to the man’s function and ambition in the firm only: the male norm of higher business education is reproduced through the type of knowledge taught, yet presented as gender neutral

* A two-sex model

☒ A one-sex system

(1) Ideas, values, practices of gender etc. institutionalized

(2) Ideas, values, practices etc. of gender mirrored in the knowledge base /curriculum of the business schools

The CHG, which was the first business school in Norway, opening in the capital in 1875, was at first closed for female applicants. Initially, this was not an outspoken strategy, just a result of a “take-for-granted” gendered norm, where men and women were

thought of as having different roles and duties in society. But the moment women got access to the formal degree upon which enrolment to the CHG was based, the gender requirement turned into an explicit strategy. Shortly after the "middle-school" exam was available for women, in 1878, the management of CHG decided to create an evening class for women. The female evening course in commerce and business administration opened in January 1879, and was of one-year duration, while the "male" full-time program lasted for two. Accordingly, Oslo, or Christiania, developed an explicit two-sex model of higher business education, teaching men and women in "separate spheres" and in different subjects: the female exclusion hence was both institutionalized and knowledge based, and continued to be so despite the introduction of gender equality in institutions of higher learning in 1896 (Strategy / Structure A & B).

The female track at the CHG was not thought of as "higher education", but as vocational or professional training. These areas were not part of the educational landscape that underwent legal changes in the late 1890s, and continued therefore to operate in accordance with an explicit gender structure. But in 1903, the men of the CHG had to give in to public pressure and introduced coeducation in their two-year-long "male" program, mainly because they had the ambition to develop the program into a "true" institution of higher learning, consisting of three years, but also because official attitudes towards women were changing. Norway was one of the first countries in the world to introduce confined suffrage for women with taxable income in 1907, and universal suffrage for women in 1913. To continue barring women from certain institutions and occupations because of their sex, was therefore considered to be illegitimate.

CHG's new gender policy had no immediate affect on the enrolment and gender balance among the business graduates, however. The school continued for a long time to take on only male applicants, while the school community conserved its gentlemanly culture, with the aid of both its teachers and management. The female pupils frequenting the school "after dinner" were, for instance, not included in the graduates' associations, and social arrangements were strictly male, until well into the 1920s. The very limited effect of the repeal of the gender barriers in 1903 was primarily due to the continuation of the female evening classes. Coeducation led, in other words, not to an equal access of

boys into the female program. On the contrary, it continued as before, recruiting and training only female applicants for secretarial work in public and private administration. So even though female exclusion was no longer an institutionalized reality on a higher level, it continued to be a "lived" reality for most of the women within the field. Formal access to the educational institutions of men gave, in other words, no guarantees of equal practice. Women's training preferences continued to correspond to the unspoken or hidden, but significant, symbolic gender structures found in the field of higher business training, as much as in the world of business.

After 1903, female exclusion hence moves from being explicit to becoming implicit, institutionally speaking, yet legitimized in relation to the gender-specific requirements of professionalization (Strategy / Structure B, C & D): because as long women and men were thought of as filling different roles and functions in the business firm, they were also in need of different, yet, complementary knowledge and skills. This way of organizing and structuring the field, which was found first in the Norwegian capital, served as a model for other, later, business schools or gymnasiums around the country. In larger towns like Bergen and Trondheim, but also in smaller townships like Fredrikstad and Sandefjord, business schools were created in accordance with the implicit two-sex model developed by the commercial community of Christiania. On the one hand, there was a two-year – later three-year – track open for both boys and girls, whereas, on the other hand, there was also a one-year program for girls, building on the same formal requirements as the former; i.e. the middle-school exam.

In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, the implicit two-sex model of the Norwegian business schools was increasingly challenged by a change of mentality and behavior of the young girls. From being exclusively "male" for decades, the commercial gymnasiums underwent a massive feminization in the interwar years. The conceptualization of the "new woman", the "young flapper"; but also the demographic changes in terms of a rising marriage-frequency and prolonged schooling among women, with a preference for vocational studies, contributed to this change. By the outbreak of World War Two, there were almost as many girls as boys in the commercial gymnasiums. But again, the changes had little, if any, impact on the implicit two-sex structure of the field: partly because the 1917-resolution of the Norwegian parliament to

build a *national* business school in Bergen was put into practice almost twenty years later – in 1936, and partly because the female evening classes were transformed into one-year female secretarial schools during the war. The commercial gymnasium of Oslo was the first to initiate this new program, in 1943, but shortly after other schools decided to create similar institutions. Entry to the secretarial schools, which for years operated with an explicit female gender requirement, was based on the upper-secondary degree *Examen Artium* (Ex-A), which was the same entry condition as the one practiced by the national business school in Bergen. There was still, however, a huge difference between the secretarial programs and NHH, in terms of curriculum and teaching.

As the name of the national business school indicates, the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) developed into a scientific institution of higher learning. Its educational profile was strongly influenced by the Department of Economics at the University of Oslo, developed under the Nobel-Prize winning Ragnar Frisch, but Swedish and German business schools also had a modeling effect on the content of the school. Eugene Schmalenback's efforts to move business practice into a codified knowledge, had given birth to a new academic discipline in the 1920s; business economics, and through contacts with Swedish professors and business schools, the new discipline arrived in Bergen, too. Business economics, but also political economy, were to form the core disciplines at NHH, providing the school and its graduates with both academic and political legitimacy. During the Labor-led reconstruction of Norway, political economy as Frisch had developed it had achieved a hegemonic position within the Norwegian technocracy. Business economics, which was the business graduates' key knowledge base, was for a long time overshadowed by the position and power of political economy in Norway, and thus also the economists being educated at the University in Oslo. This partly explains why political economy was given so much weight at NHH, whereas the Swedish business schools, such as Stockholm School of Economics, which served as an explicit role model for NHH, gave more priority to business economics and the new behavioral sciences, like organizational studies and later management. At NHH, in contrast, the organizational and managerial sciences were secondary, taking up considerable fewer weekly hours than economics and accounting, an emphasis that not

even the rationalization movement of the 1950s and the American "managerial challenge" of the 1960s managed to change.

The scientific platform and staff of NHH, in creating the professional rules of the game, lay the ground for a major reform of the commercial gymnasiums in the 1950s, when they developed into so-called "economical gymnasiums". Also these institutions did initially not give much weight to economics, relatively speaking, as opposed to foreign language and subjects of general culture. The secretarial schools, however, did not take part in the new knowledge regime developed by NHH. For a long time, the female "business schools" were not even included in the public regulation of commercial education, which meant that they were able to maintain their gender policies and take on only female pupils. Not until the early 1950s, when the public authorities started to look into the knowledge base and structure of these institutions, were the secretarial schools asked to open their gates for men. But again, public policies and recommendations had little effect on the gender practices within the field: the secretarial school of Oslo had only 2 male pupils in the period 1943 – 1975, while the number of girls was closer to 4,000.

Evidently, the diverging knowledge base of NHH and the secretarial schools was a major reason for the continuation of an implicit two-sex model in Norway, throughout the postwar years. Although none of them operated with specific gender requirements, they nevertheless continued to operate according to an explicit gendered knowledge order: While NHH developed into a first-class scientific institution, the secretarial schools functioned in accordance with the so-called "minimum-requirements" in economics and business administration, which meant that they gave priority to office skills like type-writing and stenography, along with Norwegian language, foreign language and office-manners. The efficiency-discourse of the American-inspired rationalization movement of the 1950, increased the amount of weekly hours taught in typewriting and stenography, on the grounds that there was a desperate need for secretaries who could type and write shorthand fast and without mistakes. This left, needless to say, the "brain"-work, personal initiative and professional ambitions to the (male) graduates of NHH. Although this school operated in accordance with the gender-neutral premises of professionalization, giving priority to research and the development

of new knowledge, hardly any of the school's graduates were women until the early 1970s. Women's entrance into the "male" business school in Bergen, challenging the implicit two-sex model, depended therefore on a change of women's values and behavior, not on formal policy making. The secretarial schools, on the other hand, recruiting mostly girls, continued as they had done before. This meant that the forms and practices of female exclusion within the field were far from abolished, or suspended, as result of the feminization of NHH and its private competitor the Norwegian School of Management (BI).⁹ Not until the early 1980s was an end put to the hidden female structure of the field, when the secretarial schools integrated into the existing corpus of Norwegian education, but then they did so as part of the upper-secondary schools not of higher education (Strategy / Structure C & D). In France, the forms of female exclusion materialized relatively different.

The feminization of the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* (HEC) was, to a larger extent than the feminization of NHH, a result of an institutional reform from above. The fact that women were barred from the school until 1973 meant that the changing mentality and behavior of women were never enough to break the explicit two-sex model of higher business education in Paris. Since the creation of *École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles* (HECJF) in 1916, as result of Louli Sanua's request to open HEC for women, female exclusion became an explicit strategy for the owners of the school; i.e. the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) (Strategy / Structure A). Before this, HEC's management had used its energy in installing competitive entry exams equal to those of the *grandes écoles*. But after the application for female admission during the Great War, the school board and the CCIP could no longer rely on the professional rules of the game, which in France signified merits and selection in accordance with a pre-given standard of *culture générale*. As an alternative, they had to start developing strategies for recognition within the elite-school community and in business. Keeping women out was one of them, thus fulfilling the gender characteristic or quality of the most influential and famous French engineering schools such as Polytechnique (X), *École Centrale* and Mines.

⁹ See Appendix 3, Table II, and Appendix 4, Table I.

But when French middle-class women got an upper-secondary education of equal value of the boys, in 1924, which meant that they could pass without difficulties the status-giving upper-secondary examination *baccalauréat* (bac), the CCIP decided to include the female business school, HECJF, in the Chamber's educational portfolio (Strategy / Structure A & B). As a matter of fact, Sanua had already offered it for sale in 1922, because of its bad financial conditions, but the CCIP did not intervene until middle-class girls were included in the educational system of the male elite. HEC intended to follow this new recruitment, but encountered major difficulties because of low social status it had among the elite. As a result, the two-sex model became a permanent institutional solution in Paris: both the *École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris* (ESCP) and the *École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales* (ESSEC), initiated by the Catholic community in Paris in 1907, took on the same gender barrier as HEC. In practice, this meant that HEC, and also its "little-brother" ESCP and the Catholic competitor, relied for a long time on the existence of a female analogue; i.e. HECJF, in combination with qualifications and selection to give the school and its graduates social and professional recognition. So instead of giving priority to science, as in Norway, HEC took on the elite-school culture and characteristics of the most famous French *grandes écoles*.

Evidently, this long abandonment of the commercial – and later business sciences – in favor of very restrictive, and explicitly gendered, admission policies, delayed the academic and scientific development of the French business schools. But paradoxically, the masculine quality seems to have ensured institutional legitimacy, until the "American challenge" provided the French business schools with more strings to their bows. After the shift from production control to organizational and financial control in the 1960s and 1970s, HEC managed to give their students an almost-guaranteed social and professional outlet on a managerial level, just like the more scientifically oriented NHH has in Norway. But, whereas the masculinity of HEC was a question of institutionalized rules, and thus a result of an explicit strategy to keep women out until 1973, the persistent "maleness" of NHH was merely a question of cultural lag and, therefore, a result of the hidden, but significant, symbolic gender structures to be found in the institutional, structural and cultural arrangements of the field. The introduction of coeducation at HEC

in 1973, but also the long existence of an elite-school for women, i.e. HECJF, facilitated the inclusion of women in the screening mechanism of the male elite. Unlike the situation at NHH, there was a relatively close connection between both the male and the female business schools and the business labor market, while a business-school degree had little, if any, real value in the true French public sector. This has had, together with the institutional abolishment of HECJF in 1975, a positive effect on the integration of women into the field of business management, as there were no more barriers or educational structures and "tracks" keeping women in "separate spheres". In Norway, in contrast, attendance at NHH has given few guarantees of employment in private business. The distance between business administration as a field of knowledge and as a field of practice is relatively larger in Norway than in France. NHH has to a larger extent operated more as an academic institution than a school for potential business managers, even though many of its graduates have found employment in the private sector. But the Norwegian public sector has also come to recognize the title "civil economist" (*siviløkonom*), a sector often preferred by women in Norway. Many of the female business graduates have, therefore, come to follow this tradition, and have applied for work in the civil service, and not in private business.

The two institutional experiences and logics outlined above, have had different impacts on the social construction of gender within the field of business education as well as business administration. But before elaborating further on the discursive implications of these varying logics, especially for those women who entered HEC and NHH in the 1970s, we shall turn to the question of gender as a source of symbolic capital. How could it be that the female exclusion materialized so differently in French and Norwegian higher business education? It moved from being explicit and institutionalized to implicit and knowledge-based in Norway, while in France – or Paris – the development went in almost the opposite direction, until the Parisian Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) introduced coeducation in 1973.

Gender – A Legitimate Source of Power?

Although the gendering of business education does not depend on the sex of the students, the processes become more explicit when the type of instruction offered attracts more

men than women (or visa versa). As Berit Gullikstad has noted in relation to the gendering of nursing in postwar Norway, this does not mean that a profession or education is more or less gendered, or more or less gender neutral. What it means is that that the gender differences are more or less evident.¹⁰ The initial objective of this project was to untangle the institutional dynamics and discourses that made certain business schools exclusively male and masculine, while business education in general appeared to be more gender neutral, or even female. But as this project and dissertation has evolved, it has also underpinned the importance of the discursive contexts for the ways in which the masculinization materialized. Although gender or masculinity was not as vital for NHH's institutional recognition as it was for HEC's, due to the development of a scientific platform in Bergen decades before similar things took place at Jouy-en-Josas, academic and political legitimacy never completely outmoded the gendered strategies. The graduates of NHH developed, to a large extent, not only the same masculine culture as the graduates of HEC, but also that of its institutional forerunner the CHG, by developing all-male societies and professional and international networks for men only. Just the title "civil economist" was implicit recognition of an outspoken fear of being associated with the female clerks within the field, since such a confusion – in their eyes at least – was very unfortunate, symbolically speaking. The early title "commercial candidate", provided by the NHH in the first years after it opened, had an unpleasant ring in the ears of the male graduates. It was said to give unfortunate associations, since it previously had been used about young female clerks and secretaries with a basic degree in commerce and typewriting.

Accordingly, both French and Norwegian business graduates carried with them an evident fear for being associated with the female sex. A potential feminization of the business schools hence implied devaluation of the field, and thus also the degree upon which their social and occupational positions relied. What differed between the two, however, is that this gender conservatism was increasingly covered up in Norway, especially after the official attitude towards women changed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. In France, on the other hand, women were looked upon as secondary citizens until the end of the last world war, if not longer, at least in terms of

¹⁰ Gullikstad, Berit (2002): 18.

their economical and educational rights. Only women of the upper social classes were treated differently in France. The history of HECJF indicates that upper-class women managed to influence and shape developments within certain areas, with the help of their class-based networks, which had strong associations with the salon-culture of the *Ancien Régime*. Norway had also a handful of well-connected middle-class women at the turn of last century, but none of them showed any interest in the commercial sphere, like Louli Sanua. Neither did the public authorities. Female business education was, consequently, left to the male business communities in Norway and not to strong-headed feminists as in France. Just like the male business schools, the female evening classes, and later secretarial schools in Norway, emerged on the outskirts of both the state bureaucracies and universities, with the bourgeois male culture as its major structuring force. But unlike the French – or Parisian – business communities, the Norwegian ones did not communicate or advocate their masculinity in the public limelight. Instead, the symbolic boundary making, with the aid of gender labels and stereotypes, took place behind closed doors. This was partly because inequalities based on gender, but also social class, lost political legitimacy throughout the twentieth century, but also because the middle class(es) never had the same sway in Norwegian society as they had in the French. Middle-class virtues like masculinity and femininity never developed into national values in Norway, whereas to a large extent they did in France.

The diverging path taken by the French and the Norwegian business schools mirrors, therefore, also the different positioning of the middle-class(es) in the respective societies. The pre-history of NHH is, in this respect, a very good example. Although a resolution to build a national business school in Bergen was passed by the Norwegian parliament as early as in 1917, the commercial gymnasiums served as the country's "business schools" until 1936. NHH was, in other words, delayed with almost two decades, primarily due to weak state finances, but also because large parts of the Norwegian commercial bourgeoisie were ruined during the 1920s, and thus brought into discredit in the eyes of the authorities.

Radicalization and rising class conflict during the interwar period, as result of the economic recession, greatly hampered the creation of a national business school on the West Coast. The election in 1935 brought the Social Democrats to power, and with that

the business-school project in Bergen changed once again. The school developed a much more academic or scientific profile than had been initially planned, at the expenses of the values and culture, but also the actual needs, of the commercial sphere. Still, the official image of NHH, with its focus on the economics sciences and not gender or class did not prevent the graduates from worshipping a male middle-class culture. Nor did the social-democratic regime care much about upper-secondary business schools. It sounds in many ways contradictory that the social-democratic government of the early postwar years, which emphasized state control and intervention in the economical sphere, never interfered more directly in the ways in which NHH, but also the commercial gymnasiums and secretarial schools, were organized and ran. It seems, in fact, as if the aversion to business education was as strong among social democrats as it was within the intellectual elite. Neither university professors nor politicians fully approved of higher business education as a true academic education, and of giving the profession of civil economist an equal value with, for instance, that of civil engineer. Business-economical thinking had a relatively low status in the spheres of politics and public administration until the neo-liberal shift of the 1980s. Before then, however, the "civil economists" had made a clean sweep in the private sector. With the result that the male business communities continued recklessly in the way they always had done without interference, and the middle-class doctrine of separate sphere was one of their key points of reference.

Safeguarding the masculine culture and communities from newcomers was, according to this ideal, vital, and it was something the graduates of NHH indeed succeeded to do well into the 1970s, when they were challenged by the rising number of female applicants for the three-year-long program in Bergen. NHH underwent major changes in the 1970s and early 1980s with regard to the sex of its student body. So did the French HEC, when it repealed the gender barrier that had secured its masculinity for more than 60 years. At this time, however, the schools had already managed to become what we can call "elite-schools" by practicing tough selection procedures. In addition they had improved their academic reputations, either through giving priority to the economic sciences, as was the case of NHH, or by taking on an American curriculum, as was the case at HEC. Yet, the notion of NHH as an elite-school, and its graduates as a business elite, has always been much less elaborated than it was at the Parisian HEC. As

already pointed out, the selection of candidates to NHH was never a result of an explicit or outspoken strategy as was articulated or explicit with the French *grandes écoles*. NHH was much younger than the Parisian business schools, and the school had both low capacity and demand compared to the HEC. The school constructed its institutional reputation on scientific activities, not selectivity.

The labor-market position and status reached by the time the feminization process began was, consequently, accomplished in accordance with the professional rules of the game, and not only with the aid of gendered strategies. A common characteristic for the field of higher business education was, however, the intricate interrelation between the significant gender structures found in business education and office work in general and the gender-neutral rules of professionalization. The number of graduates accepted at the two business-schools was never high. Selectivity – or exclusiveness – seems thus to have been an additional sources of symbolic power that mediated or interacted with gender and maleness in particular, but also with knowledge and scientific reputation.

The Female Experience of 'Difference' versus the Middle-Class Notion of 'Equality'

At the moment when young girls began to apply for business schools such as HEC and NHH, there were few women in higher managerial positions, even though the existence of HECJF had helped some women to climb relatively high in the managerial hierarchy of French firms and organizations. HECJF's professional standing was evidently lower than the "male" business schools, but as Jacqueline Laufer has shown, this did not impede female business graduates of HECJF from being promoted over time.¹¹ In her book *La féminité neutralisée? Les femmes cadres dans l'entreprise*, Laufer recounts the career tracks of several HECJF-candidates, which confirms a tradition of women in business management that was completely lacking in Norway. The entrance of girls into NHH from the late 1960s onwards, therefore took place at a time when women in managerial positions were almost unheard of in Norway, whereas the feminization of HEC carried on the feminist objectives of Mlle Sanua and HECJF in indirect ways: to qualify women for higher positions within private business. In the period of Louli Sanua

and her successors, this goal was aimed at through focusing on women's female qualities. Femininity, or gender "difference", emerged in fact as a professional strategy for the HECJF-alumni, especially during the economic recession of the 1930, in the hope that this could secure female employment in offices despite rising unemployment in business and industry. Not everybody was supportive of this strategy, however. Several graduates of HECJF copied the male strategies instead, such as leaving out the letters "JF" on their degrees when applying for work, with the hope that this would secure employment in business. These practices exemplify indeed that gender constructions are rooted in the creation of "difference". And because sex or gender is one of the most enduring models of "difference", it has often affected or modeled other power relations, such as the one between the secretary and the director, the *cadre moyen* and the *cadres supérieures*, and between lower and higher business education.

HECJF opposed, to some respect, this gendered logic of power, by being the provider of an elite education in business for women, and by including women in the *cadre* movement – which in practice meant that their candidates could be classified, professionally speaking, far higher than most other office girls and women. Yet in practice, it "forced" the candidates in many ways to neglect their femininity, and stand forward as being as gender neutral as possible, knowing it would increase their possibilities of obtaining the positions they were trained for. One of the female candidates, who graduated in the 1950s, even said it helped to behave in a masculine way: "J'avais une nature masculine qui a fait que je me suis mieux intégrée à une équipe d'hommes. Entre nous, pas de différence."¹² This shows that there was much more to gender than that which we manage to grasp through investigating the discourses or representation of gender within the field, and that there is more in the logic or rule of "difference" that we manage to grasp through language.

The graduates of HECJF never fully accepted collective mobilization based on their gender, albeit the school and its management thought of femininity as an asset in relation to the business labor market ruled by men. This way of thinking changed, however, in the late postwar years, and particularly after the school was reorganized in

¹¹ Laufer, Jacqueline (1982).

¹² *HECJF Bulletin* (No. 218, 1966): 21.

accordance with the "American model". The educational reform of HECJF in the late 1960s, under American influence, reduced the gap between the male and the female versions of higher business education in Paris, and thus also the two-sex model (Strategy / Structure A). By taking on the same content and entry-requirements as the Parisian business schools for men, the male-female split could no longer be related to a different knowledge-base, but to an institutional barrier, which lasted until September 1973. This lay the ground for a rapid feminization, which changed HEC from being an exclusively male school to becoming a relatively gender balanced institution of higher business learning.

The feminization of NHH and HEC brought about very different discursive and strategic consequences regarding gender: "sameness" versus "difference", "invisibility" versus "visibility", and "continuity" versus "discontinuity". In Norway, the feminization of higher business education was merely considered to be as a result of a change in female mentality and behavior, whereas the Parisian encounter was also entangled with an institutional reform from above, providing the female students with legitimacy to operate in the field together with the boys. Also the existence of HECJF, a female business school with elite-school status, made the Parisian experience of the feminization very different from the Norwegian. The continuity with the past gender regimes and practices became much more visible in Paris than in Norway, where the female secretarial schools were not considered to be part of higher education, despite their high entrance requirements. The growing interest in higher business studies among Norwegian women in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, appeared therefore as something "new", even if women had been present in the field of commerce and business learning for about a century.¹³ Norwegian women had, like the French, undertaken commercial training for a long time, but they were structurally and culturally excluded from what was regarded as higher business studies until the 1970s. Women's entry at NHH affirmed nevertheless an old preference for shorter and vocational education among young women, even if the feminization, as such, required a considerable change in ways of thinking and practicing gender.

¹³ See Appendix 3, Table II.

The lack of explicit elite schools in Norway seems to have had a major impact on the social construction of gender within the field of higher business studies, or to turn this the other way around: the existence of elite schools in France has had an impact on the social construction of gender there. Just the fact that HECJF was included in the elite-school fraternity was vital for the symbolic value of its degree, and thus also its graduates' working possibilities. But, whereas the existence of HECJF invited a strategic use of gender as "difference" in the business labor market, since gender served as the main reason for the two-sex model, the repeal of the gender barrier in 1973 changed the female strategies. The result of the historical-institutional dynamics outlined in the latter part of the dissertation, was the conceptualization of "sameness" or "equality" as a prerequisite for gender equality within the Parisian field, whereas the implicit exclusion mechanisms which ruled in the Norwegian field gave space for gender as "difference". The old debate on equality versus difference was, therefore, highly vivid and relevant within the Norwegian field; whereas some demanded that more women enter the field on the basis of formal equality with men, others advocated women's "difference". Recruiting more women to NHH would, especially according to women sympathizing within the neo-feminist movement, not only create a more gender balanced labor market in the private sector, but it would also provide the business world with new values and experiences, since women represented something different from men.

Argumentation of the latter kind was more or less unheard of within the French field, simply because essential discourses on gender, defining gender as "difference", for long had served as the main reason for the two-sex model, and thus women's exclusion from the "male" business schools. The young girls entering HEC in the 1970s had, therefore, good reason to fear this kind of essentialism, as they were well aware of its potential consequences. But there were also further reasons, other than past institutional practices, for this lack of trust in the language of "difference" among HEC-girls. Firstly, the feminization of HEC took place very rapidly, after the gender barrier was abolished in 1973. The experience of being a minority, and thus "different" from a taken-for-granted norm was therefore not as fateful for the girls' self-identification as it was with the women at the NHH. It took, as we have seen, considerable longer time before the female student-population rose above 10% in Bergen than in Paris. Secondly, the competitive

entrance exams seem to have given the HEC-girls a higher self-esteem. Being selected for admission at HEC stands in many ways for itself: or as one said; *après les concours c'est la fête!*. The need for female solidarity never seems to have been as precarious at HEC during the 1970s as it was at NHH in the same time period, which only about 4 – 5% of its incoming students at this time were female. This situation also made the emerging Women's Liberation Movement into an important reference point for the "female pioneers" at NHH, not only as a way of coping with the everyday problems, but also as part of the girls' self-identification. Just because they were for a long time a small minority, gender stood forward as an important source of identity. Many of the girls entering the school in the 1970s tended therefore to identify, in one way or another, with the organized women's movement in Norway, even if the student population at NHH was much more conventional than university students were in general.

The different discursive and strategic consequences of the feminization within the community of HEC and NHH were however not only a product of diverging institutional logics with regard to gender and female exclusion. It has also to be related to the different ideological climates of France and Norway at the time. The social-democratic legacy gave, without doubt, more room for political mobilization on the basis of group-characteristics like gender and female solidarity than the liberal-democratic tradition of France did, based as it is on the recognition of individual rights. What is still interesting, concerning the feminization of NHH, is that the social-democratic conceptions of solidarity, social equality and consensus never managed to discard or replace the liberal values of the middle class(es) within the school community, such as individuality, meritocracy, equality of opportunity etc. Affirmative action strategies were, therefore, strongly opposed at NHH, even though the public authorities allowed for the use of the positive discrimination of women with regard to higher education, hiring and promotion in the late 1970s, in order to create a more gender-equal society. To mobilize on behalf of women hence was easier said than done within the field of higher business education and administration. It seems, therefore, that the incorporation of the "second sex" at NHH never engendered a loss of its middle-class stamp. What can be suggested instead, is that

by integrating women on a more equal basis with men, the culture of the business schools and corporate life in general, had to change in both countries.¹⁴

Further Research

There has been a significant reworking of managerial identities since the late 1970s, when women stopped being formally barred from managerial posts. To think that this implied a consequent larger focus on so-called "female" qualities within management is, however, difficult to say, at least with respect to businessmen and women themselves. What is visible, however, is the reluctance among women, but also men, within the field to acknowledge gender as a relevant managerial qualification.¹⁵ To be more precise, gender is most often seen as irrelevant for the type of work carried out by business managers. In other words, they stick to the gender-neutral rules of professionalization, even if the business graduates do not represent a profession in the traditional sense of the word. They just tend to act professionally. Still, one might wonder to what extent the feminization of HEC and NHH in the 1970s and early 1980s, have given more female managers.

Although this question extends the scope of this dissertation, it deserves future research. Given the wide coverage given to women and management-related issues over the last decades, especially in Norway, knowledge about female-business graduates' careers is highly relevant for both current debates and policymaking. Even if this thesis has concentrated on the ways in which higher business education both shaped and was shaped by ideas of manhood and womanhood, masculinity and femininity, it has also given me insights into the professional careers of the women who entered HEC and NHH in this period. Of course, my picture of the situation is in no way statistically representative, since it simply relies on a very limited number of interviews. However, no one has, as far as I know, made a complete survey of the careers of the female business

¹⁴ Kocka, Jürgen (1995): 805, Larsen, Eirinn (2003).

¹⁵ This statement is based on the interviews of the female business graduates. Similar values and attitudes are being expressed through a survey organized by "L'Association du Groupe HEC" in 2001; "HEC au féminin", résultats de l'étude quantitative, mai 2001. Female graduates from HEC are, for instance, principally against the use of affirmative action which has the aim of getting more women into business management. So are many of the Norwegian business graduates spoken too, although some are slightly more positive than the French women are.

graduates, in order to compare it with what we know about the professional lives of the male candidates.¹⁶ During the interviews, I therefore made sure not only to get information about the interviewee's own line of business, but I also asked about their female classmates, in order to get a more general picture of the professional opportunities and choices that faced the first generation of female business graduates from HEC and NHH.

One of my findings is that the female graduates of HEC, to a large extent, came to work in the private sector. Finance, marketing and consulting are the most common working areas, but quite a few from the early period have also qualified academically within the disciplines of business administration and management.¹⁷ Several of the current female associate professors at HEC have a *Diplôme HEC* from the mid- and late 1970s. Manager or *cadre supérieure* is, however, the most common title to be found among the female graduates from this period, but according to a relatively recent survey conducted by the "Association HEC" in 2001, 9% of them were currently working as *Chefs d'Entreprise*, while as much as 20% of those who are more than 40 years old held positions as *Directeur Général* (DG), i.e. general director.¹⁸ Many of the female business graduates from the period have, therefore, made business careers, even if they most have not, in fact, managed to climb as high as some of the men. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that gender or masculinity is no longer is a guarantee for managerial work. Rising unemployment among the older male candidates was, for instance, a growing problem in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Newly educated "civil economists" encountered similar problems in Norway in those years, due to the international recession and its negative effect on Norwegian business and industry.

Norwegian female civil economists, who graduated from NHH in the 1970s and early 1980s, have also tended to find employment in banking and insurance, and later consultancy, ahead of other industries. There is still a major difference between the career paths of the French and the Norwegian women, in the sense that a larger part of the female civil economists have come to work in public sector rather than in private

¹⁶ The survey "HEC au féminin", from May 2001, did not do this.

¹⁷ This has also been confirmed by the survey mentioned above and the *L'Annuaire Association HEC 1996*.

¹⁸ "HEC au féminin", résultats de l'étude quantitative, mai 2001.

business. Of course, this might have changed in the last decade or two, but with respect to those graduating in the 1970s and early 1980s, few began working in private business after graduation. HEC seems therefore to have provided more female business managers than NHH has. This has, without doubt, helped to maintain Norwegian business as a male and masculine sphere of work. Women represent, according to recent Power and Democracy Report (1998 – 2003), only 4% of the current business elite in Norway.¹⁹

The historical-comparative approach has therefore the advantage of not only demonstrating that the processes of professionalization were, to a large extent, the same as masculinization within the French and Norwegian field of higher business education between 1870 and 1970, but it also enables us to move beyond apparent cultural paradoxes, such as the general lack of women in Norwegian business management.

¹⁹ See Trygve Gulbrandsen (2002): 49 and Øyvind Østerud, Fredrik Engelstad & Per Selle (2003).

Appendices

Appendix 1

Table I: The percentage of female civil engineers graduated from some central French *grandes écoles* of engineering per decade in the period 1962 – 2001.

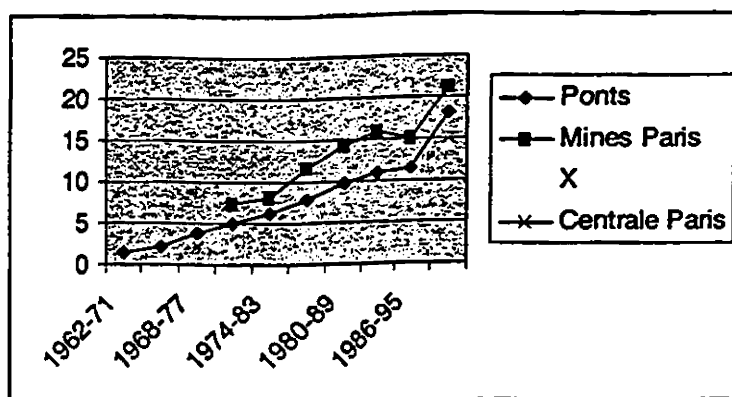
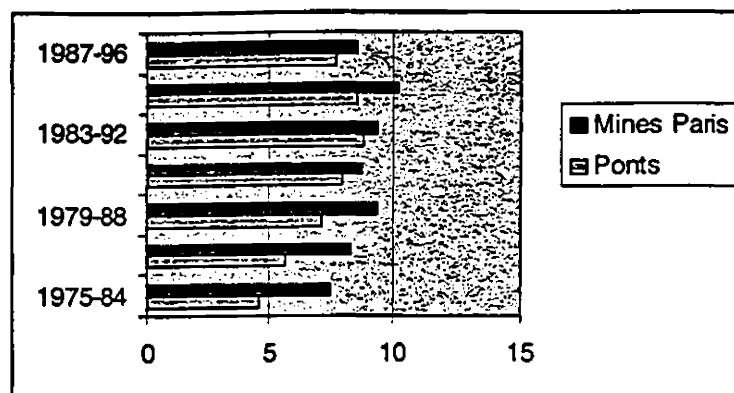


Table II: The percentage of female engineers in the *corps des Mines et des Ponts et Chaussées*¹

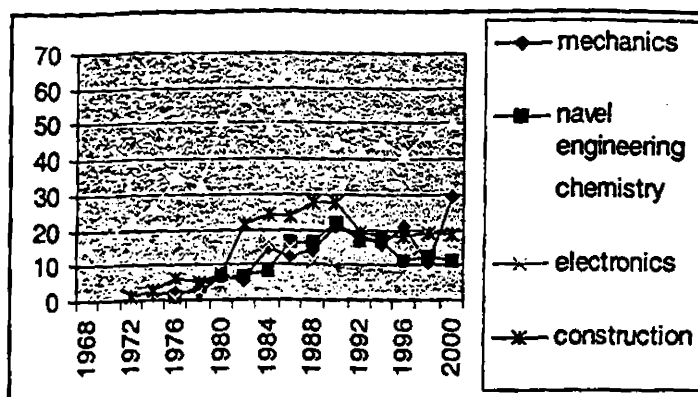


Sources: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale : <http://www.education.gouv.fr/syst/egalite/statistique.htm>, *La place des filles dans une filière de formation des cadres. Du lycée aux grandes écoles scientifiques* (1997) : 28 – 29, *Hommes et commerce* (1971) No. 117 : 61.

¹ *Ingénieurs du corps des Mines et des Ponts et Chaussées* (The engineering corps of *Mines* and *Ponts et Chaussées*) makes up a part of the *grands corps*, which is the highest level of corps in French administrative system. The *grands corps* is a goal of graduates of the *grandes écoles*, and is often used as a springboard to high-level positions in the private sector (Pierre Bourdieu (1989/1996): Translator's Appendix: 391).

Appendix 2

The percentage of female students admitted at NTH/NTNU 1967 – 2000.



Sources: Statistics gathered from the admission office at NTNU, supplemented by Kvande & Rasmussen (1993).

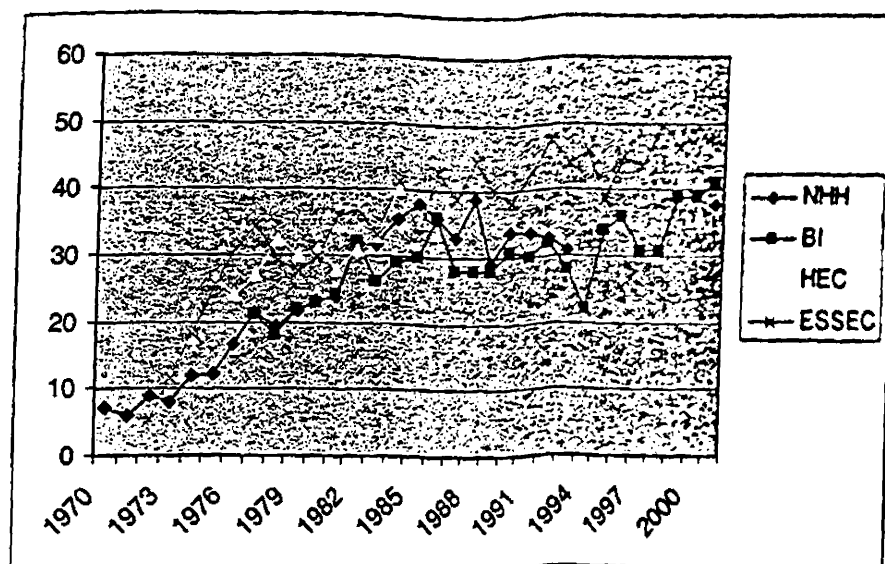
Appendix 3

Table I: Overview of women graduating from NHH in the period 1960 – 1969.

Year	Number of female graduates	Number of graduates totally
1960	0	57
1961	2	55
1962	1	51
1963	2	60
1964	1	52
1965	0	83
1966	3	102
1967	4	153
1968	5	146
1969	2	188
Totally	20	947

Sources: Statistics made by Jørund Alme, NHH Bergen, 15.08.1996

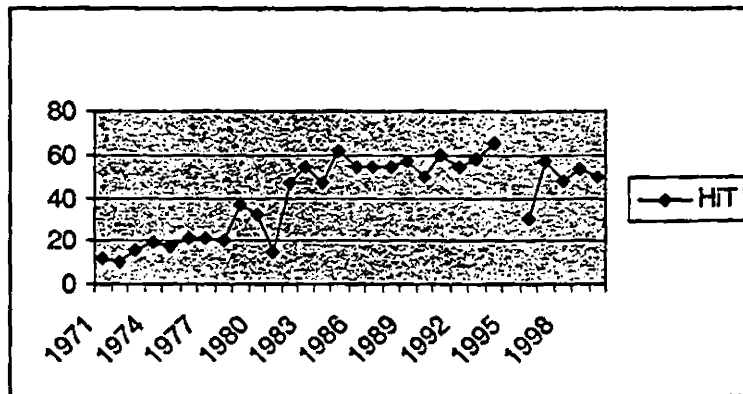
Table II: The percentage of female students admitted at NHH, BI, HEC, and ESSEC in the period 1970 - 2000.



Sources: Statistics gathered from the admission offices at NHH, BI, HEC and ESSEC, complemented by Jensen & Svendsen (1986): 331, *Hommes et commerce* (No. 145 - 146, 1975): 54; (No. 151 - 152, 1976): 62; (No. 159, 1978): 50; (No. 164, 1979): 54; (No. 168, 1980): 59; (No. 184, décembre 1984): 54.

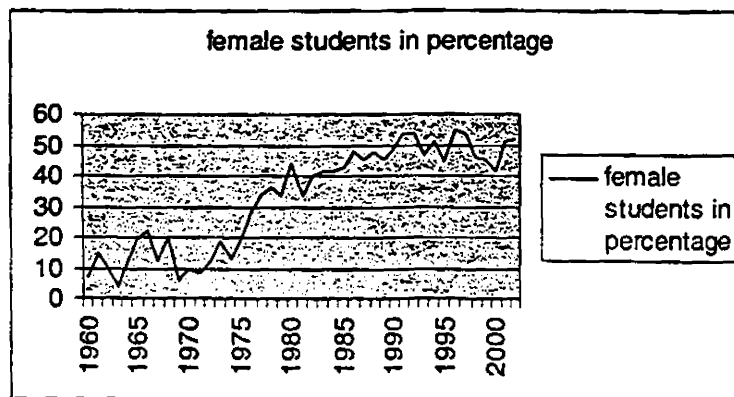
Appendix 4

Table I: The percentage of female students enrolled in business administration at Høgskolen i Telemark (the Regional College of Telemark – HiT) in the period 1971 – 2000.



Sources: Statistics gathered from the admission office HiT, in Bø.

Table II: The percentage of female students at the ESC de Rouen in the period 1960 – 2002.



Sources: Statistics gathered from the Secrétariat Général: École Supérieure de Commerce de Rouen.

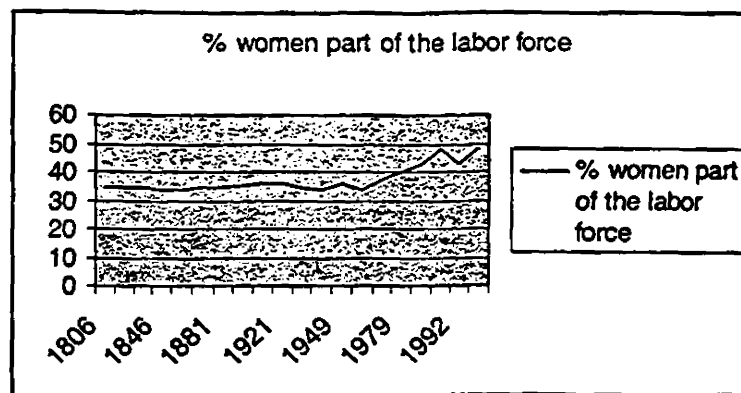
Appendix 5

Table I: The working force in the period 1806 – 1988; France, in numbers and percentage.

<i>Year</i>	<i>W Active populat - ion in numb. (mill).</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% women in the working force</i>	<i>W The distri- bution of activity in percent- age</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Total Activity</i>
1806	4 415	8 456	12 871	34,4	29,4	58,1	43,5
1821	4 656	8 936	13 592	34,3	29,2	59,7	44,0
1831	4 980	9 567	14 547	34,2	29,7	59,4	44,3
1846	5 501	10 641	16 142	34,1	30,9	61,1	45,9
1851	5 669	10 994	16 663	34,0	31,5	61,8	46,6
1866	6 287	12 025	18 312	34,4	33,0	63,2	48,1
1881	6 445	12 078	18 312	34,8	34,4	64,7	49,5
1896	6 805	12 515	19 320	35,2	35,2	66,1	50,5
1911	7 217	12 879	20 096	35,9	36,2	66,9	51,3
1921	7 231	12 776	20 007	36,1	35,5	69,3	51,6
1931	6 986	13 411	20 397	34,3	32,8	67,4	49,5
1936	6 542	12 650	19 192	34,1	30,6	63,9	46,6
1949	6 966	12 552	19 518	35,7	32,3	63,0	47,1
1961	6 741	13 162	19 903	33,9	28,2	58,4	42,9
1973	8 225	14 010	22 235	37,0	30,8	54,7	42,5
1979	9 294	14 089	23 383	39,7	33,8	53,7	43,5
1988	10 321	13 941	24 262	42,5	35,9	51,1	43,3

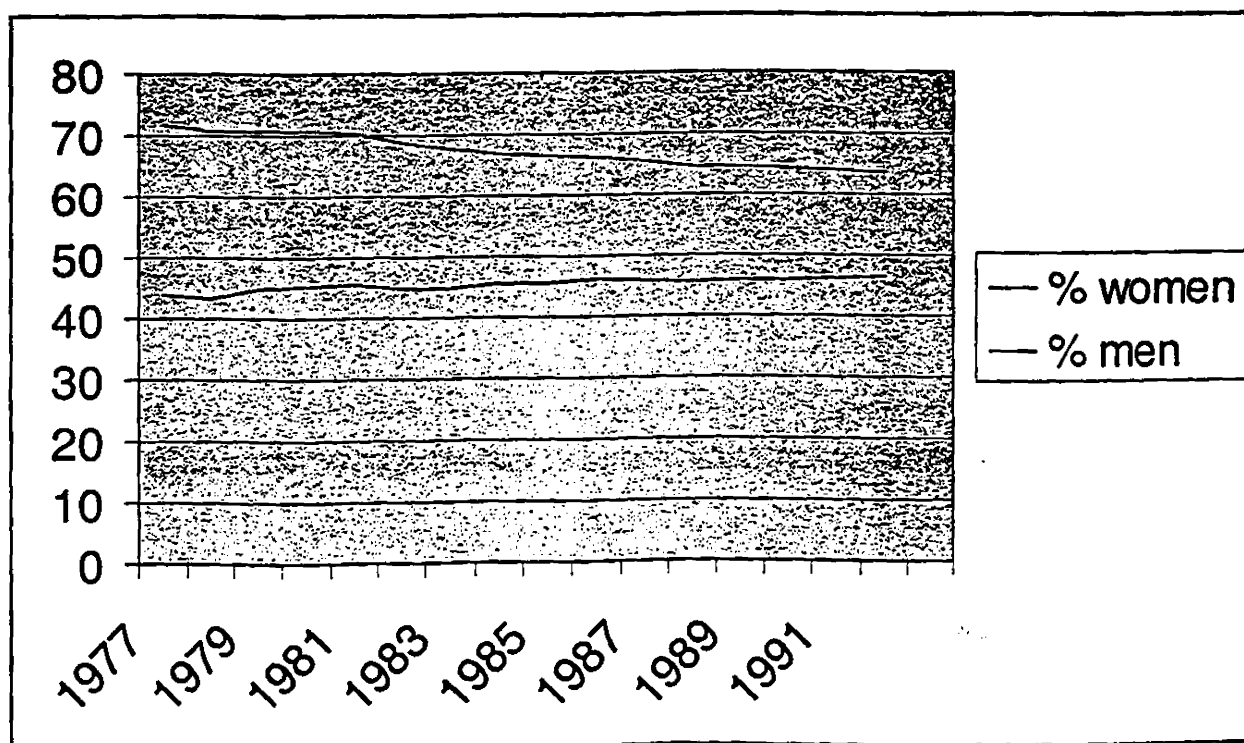
Source: INSEE, O. Marchand & C. Thélot, "Deux siècles de travail en France", INSEE, Études, 1991.

Table II: The percentage of active women in the period 1906 – 1996; France.



Source: INSEE, O. Marchand & C. Thélot, "Deux siècles de travail en France", INSEE, Études, 1991, Dossiers statistiques. Les chiffres-clés du travail féminin; Bilan 1975 – 1982, Réalisé par P. Briant, S. Rimbart & C. Sofer (CRESET Université d'Orléans): 39, Jacqueline Laufer & Eirinn Larsen (2002): 800 - 801.

Table III: The distribution of working women and men in percentage in the period 1977 – 1992; France.



Source: Dossiers statistiques. Les chiffres-clés du travail féminin; Bilan 1975 – 1982, Réalisé par P. Briant, S. Rimbart & C. Sofer (CRESET Université d'Orléans): 21.

Appendix 6

Table I: The number of women in the liberal professions in the period 1882 – 1930; France

FEMALE		MEDICAL		DOCTORS		FEMALE		LAWYERS	
Year	In Paris	In France	Year	In France	In the Colonies	Year	In France	In the Colonies	
1882	7	7	1901	2					
1883	11	11	1904	3					
1903	30	95	1906	2					
1921	160	320	1908	5	1				
1928	311	556	1910	11	2				
1929	285	519	1912	14					
			1914	19					
			1916	23					
			1918	41	1				
			1920	55	1				
			1924	81	8				
			1926	118	3				
			1928	184	3				
			1930	216	7				

Source: Denise Laubeuf (1936): "Le travail féminin en France", HECJF Bulletin (No. 114): 5 – 6.

Table II: The number of women graduated from the Royal Fredric's University between 1884 and 1913, Norway.

Medicine	43
Law	11
Science	8
Art	19

Source: Norske Kvinder (1914): 147, 139 – 141.

Appendix 7

History of French business schools until 1940 with institutions gendered female in italics.

1820 (1854)	École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP)
1866 – 1870	Mulhouse
1871	ÉSC Le Havre ÉSC Rouen ²
1872	ÉSC Lyon ÉSC Marseille
1874	ÉSC Bordeaux
1881	École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC), Paris
1884	Institut Commercial de Paris (IC)
1892	ÉSC Lille
1897	ÉSC Montpellier ICN Nancy
1900	ÉSC Nantes ÉSC Dijon
1901	ÉSC Alger
1902	ÉSC Toulouse
1913 (1907)	École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (ESSEC), Paris ³
1916	<i>École de Haut Enseignement Commercial pour les Jeunes Filles (HECJF), Paris</i>
1919	ÉSC Clermont-Ferrand
1921	École de Hautes Études Commerciales du Nord (EDHEC), Lille
1928	ÉSC Reims
1931	Centre de préparation aux Affaires (CPA), Paris ⁴

Sources: Lars Engwall and Vera Zamagni (eds. 1998): 5, Luc Lehericy et Tangry Pechon (1990), Bruno Magliulo (1982), Marc Meuleau & Robert Locke (1988), André Grelon (1997), Pierre-Henri Haas (1993), Jean-Marie Peretti (1996): 236, Archives Nationales box CSP 771189 ART 30. The sources give at times contradictory information about the opening years for some of the schools, which most truly can be explained by a difference between year of founding and year of opening.

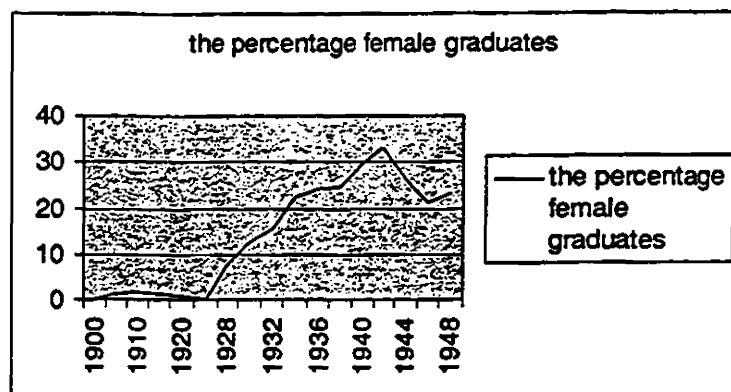
² École supérieure de Rouen was closed from 1886 to 1895.

³ ESSEC was the continuation of catholic *Institut Economique* (IE) established by Jesuits within l'Ecole Sainte-Geneviève (Versailles) in 1907. It was later transferred to the Catholic Institute of Paris (ICP), renamed as ESSEC.

⁴ CPA, established by the CCIP, was devoted post-graduate training in management and thus not directly comparable to the regional ESC or the Parisian commercial schools. CPA made for instance use of the "case method", imported from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. In this way, CPA, which later on changed it's name to *Centre de Perfectionnement dans l'Administration des Affaires* characterizes more the American inspired trend of executive training and management education that came to take place in the postwar years than the institutional development of business education in France until the Second World War. For more on this issue, see Marie-Emmanuelle Chessel (1992), (2001 with Fabienne Pavis).

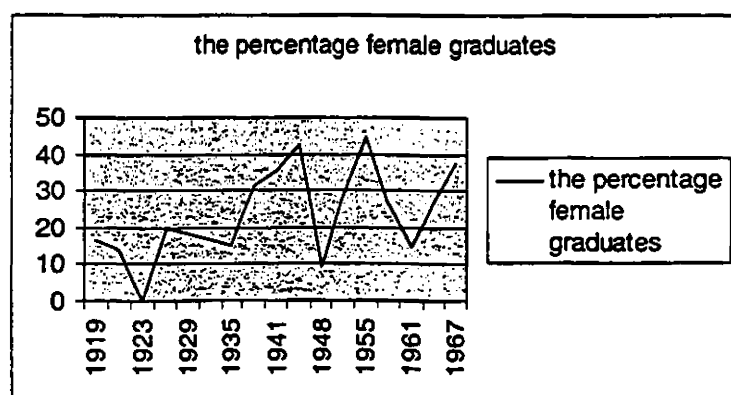
Appendix 8

Table I: The percentage of women graduating from the Norwegian commercial *gymnasiums* (*handelsgymnasier* two-years tracks) in the period 1900 – 1948.



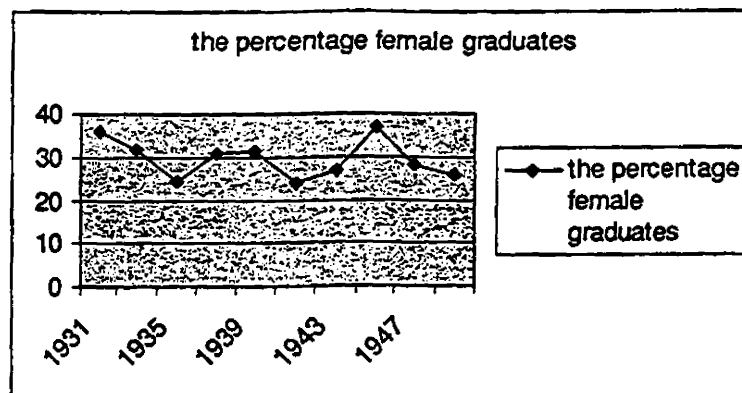
Source: RA 1251.2/12, *Innstilling fra Den Departementale Handelsgymnaskomité* (oppnevnt 2. Mai 1946) 1949, 1 Bind: 10.

Table II: The percentage of women graduating from *Sandeffjord handelsgymnasium* (two-years track) in the period 1919 – 1967.



Source: *Sandeffjord handelsgymnasium* (Erling Groth) (1967): *Sandeffjord handelsgymnasium: 1917 – 1967*: 17 – 61.

Table III: The percentage women graduating from *Trondheim handelsgymnasium* (three-years track) in the period 1931 – 1948.



Source: RA 1251.2/12, *Innstilling fra Den Departementale Handelsgymnaskomité* (oppnevnt 2. Mai 1946) 1949, 1 Bind: 38.

Table IV: The number of girls attending OHG in the years between 1904 and 1913.

Academic Year	Pupils totally	Number of girls
1904 – 05	178	5
1905 – 06	188	6
1906 – 07	188	8
1907 – 08	200	5
1908 – 09	203	4
1909 – 10	196	2
1910 – 11	205	2
1911 – 12	223	0
1912 – 13	221	1

Source: *Norske Kvinder* (1914): 222.

Table V: The number of girls graduating from *Bergen handelsgymnasium* in the years between 1906 and 1913

Academic Year	Number of Female Graduates
1906	4
1910	2
1912	1
1913	1

Source: *Norske Kvinder* (1914): 223.

Appendix 9

Number of work offers, demands and placement effectuated by the Association des anciennes élèves de HECJF in the period 1932 – 1937, 1945 – 1962.

Years: 1932 – 37	Offers	Demands	Placements effectuated
1932	179	-	162
1933	198	-	88
1934	217	-	101
1935	251	-	106
1936	277	-	147
1937	458	-	162
Years 1945 – 62	Offers	Demands	Placements
1945	1063	-	242
1946	698	358	145
1947	436	260	122
1948	-	-	-
1949	304	194	82
1950	295	214	90
1951	312	201	97
1952	340	241	98
1953	309	230	95
1954	399	245	137
1955	454	236	124
1956	509	257	133
1957	481	266	123
1958	445	260	126
1959	468	282	131
1960	480	-	117
1961	480	-	122
1962	349	273	95

Source: BNF: 8-JO-389, Bulletin HECJF (1932 – 1962).

Appendix 10

Table I: The number of students in total and female students (in numbers and percentage) attending French universities in the years 1900, 1925 and 1950.

Year	Number of university students in total	Number of female university students
1900	29 377	965 / 3,3%
1925	53 051	10 381 / 19,6%
1950	136 744	46 629 / 34,1%

Table II: The distribution of female university students (in numbers and percentage) within different faculties the years 1900, 1925 and 1950; France.

Year	Law	Sciences	Humanities	Medicine	Pharmacy
1900	5	129	247	528	65
1925	1 335	1 407	4 721	1 990	917
1950	9 616 (24,6% of total)	6 632 (26,2% of total)	20 004 (56,7% of total)	6 479 (21,9% of total)	3 882 (53,5% of total)

- In 1950, the female students made up a totally 34% of the university students.

Source: J. Nâret (1953): *Les carrières féminines; écoles, professions, débouchés par les jeunes filles* (Paris: Lamarre): 30.

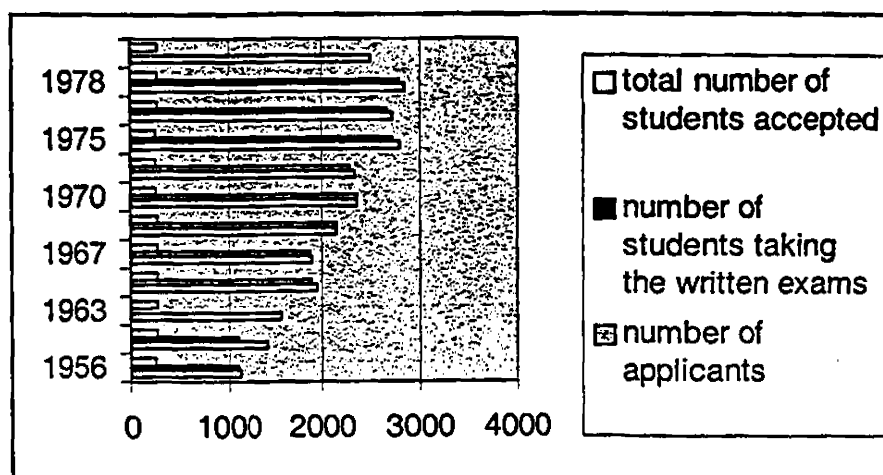
Appendix 11

Table I: Degree of selectivity during admission at HEC, HECJF and ESCP in 1956

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Students registered totally</i>	<i>Students presented; concours</i>	<i>Students admitted</i>	<i>% admitted according to the number presented in 1956</i>	<i>% admitted according to the number presented in 1955</i>	<i>Resigned or suspended students & "redoublants"</i>	<i>Number of students in first year</i>
HEC	1134	1118	250	22	21	1 + 8	257
HECJF	385	378	124	33	36	2 + 5	127
ESCP	956	846	298	35	27,5	67 + 17	248

Source: ACCIP, I - 2,73 (4): *Situation des écoles de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris* (1.12.1956): 56-3.

Table II: Degree of selectivity during admission at HEC, 1956 - 1980 in real numbers



Source: AN Coté CAC 900502: *Ministère éducation nationale: direction des enseignements technologiques supérieures*: CSP 78 0502 ART 31, 32: *HEC concours d'admission*.

Appendix 12

History of Norwegian business schools until 1940 with institutions for women in italics.

1875 Kristiania /Oslo Handelsgymnasium (KHG/OHG)

1879 *Det kvindelige eftermiddagskursus, Oslo*

1904 Bergen Handelsgymnasium (BHG)

1904 *Eftermiddagskursus for kvinder, Bergen*

1913 Trondhjems Handelsgymnasium (THG)

1913 *Eftermiddagskursus for piker, Trondhjem*

1917 Sandefjord Handelsgymnasium (SHG)

1921 Stavanger Handelsgymnasium (SHG)

1926 Volda Handelsgymnasium (VHG)

Kristiansand Handelsgymnasium (KHG)

1936 Norges Handelshøyskole (NHH), Bergen

1938 Fredrikstad Handelsgymnasium (FHG)

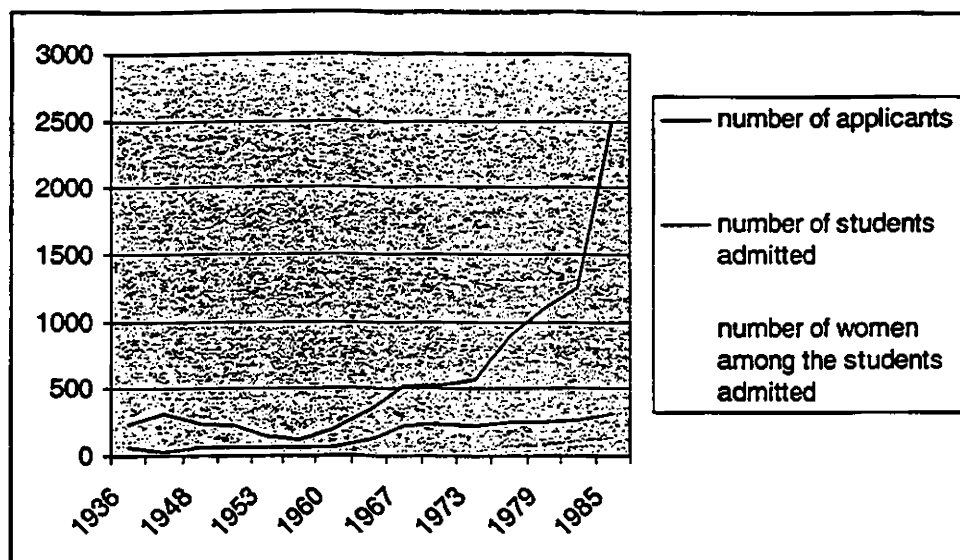
Hamar Handelsgymnasium (HHG)

1939 Tønsberg Handelsgymnasium (THG)

Sources: RA, 1251,2/12 Råd og nemder for Handelsundervisning. Box 1 A 03453: Undervisningsnemnd for handelsgymnasene, Oslo Handelsgymnasium (1928): *Det ett-årige eftermiddagskursus for kvinder gennem 50 år*, Undervisningsplan for Bergens Handelsgymnasium (1904): 7, Støren, Wilhelm & John I Skjerve (1988): 21.

Appendix 13

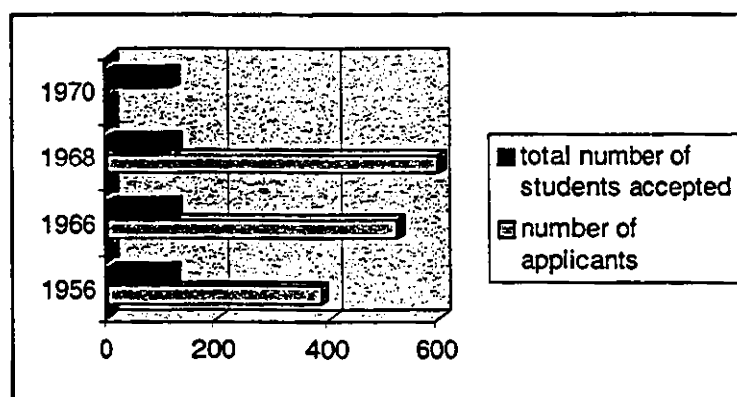
Degree of selectivity during admission at NHH, 1936 – 1985.



Sources: Olav Harald Jensen & Arnljot Strømme Svendsen (1986): 198, 275, 331, and statistics made by Jørund Alme, NHH Bergen, 15.08.1996.

Appendix 14

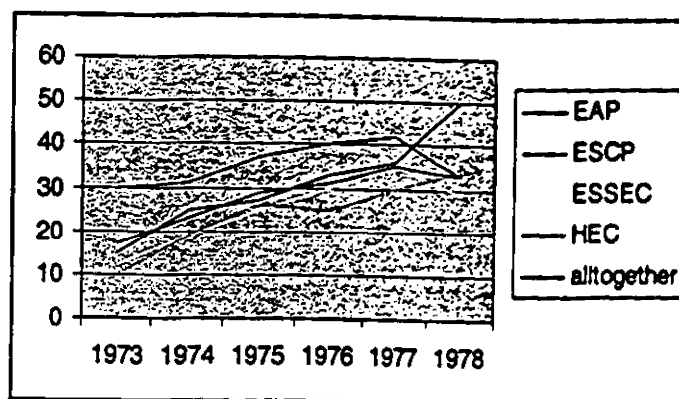
Degree of selectivity during admission at HECJF, 1956 – 1970.



Source: ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): Situation des écoles de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris (1er décembre 1956), HECJF Bulletin (No. 217, 1966: 34, No. 225, 1968:31, No. 231, 1970: 24).

Appendix 15

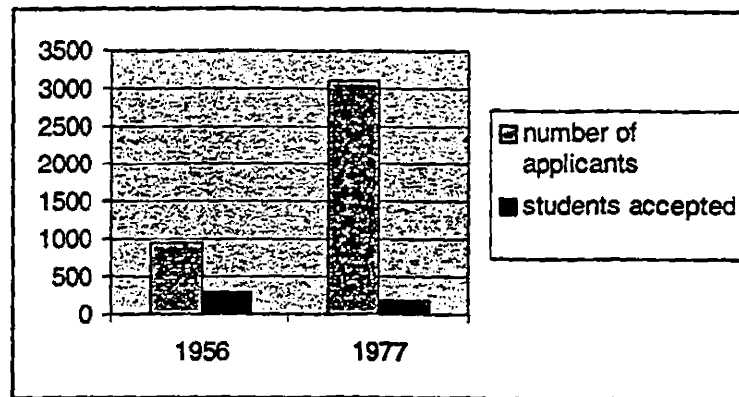
The percentage of female students admitted at EAP, ESCP, ESSEC and HEC between 1973 and 1978.



Sources: HECJF Bulletin (1er trimestre, 1979): 17 - 18, Hommes et commerce (No. 145 - 146, 1975): 54; (No. 151 - 152, 1976): 62; (No. 159, 1978): 50; (No. 164, 1979): 54; (No. 168, 1980): 59.

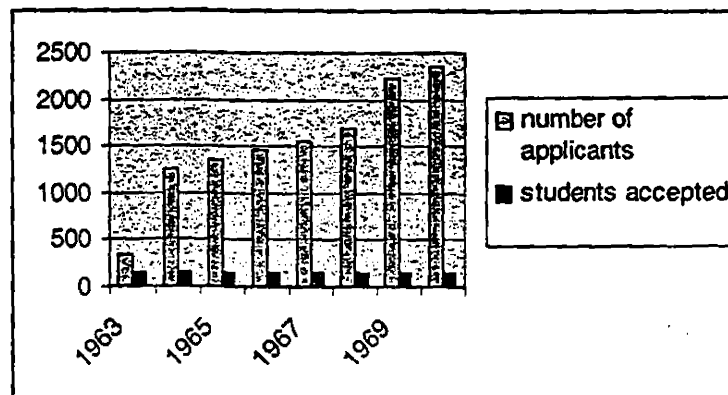
Appendix 16

Table I: Degree of selectivity during admission at ESCP, 1963 – 1970.



Sources: ACCIP, I – 2,73 (4): *Situation des écoles de la Chambre de commerce de Paris (1er décembre 1956)*, *L'Hermès* (1977).

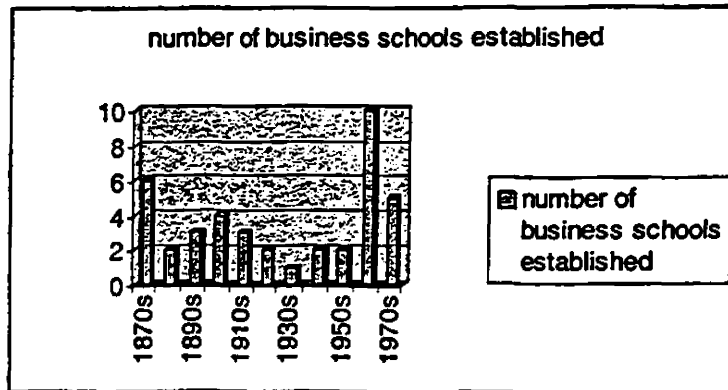
Table II: Degree of selectivity during admission at ESSEC, 1963 – 1970.



Source: AN Coté CAC 900502: *Ministère Éducation nationale: direction des enseignements technologiques supérieurs: CSP 78 0502 ART 32: ESSEC concours d'admission (1962 – 1970)*.

Appendix 17

The number of business schools established in France in the period 1870s – 1970s.



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